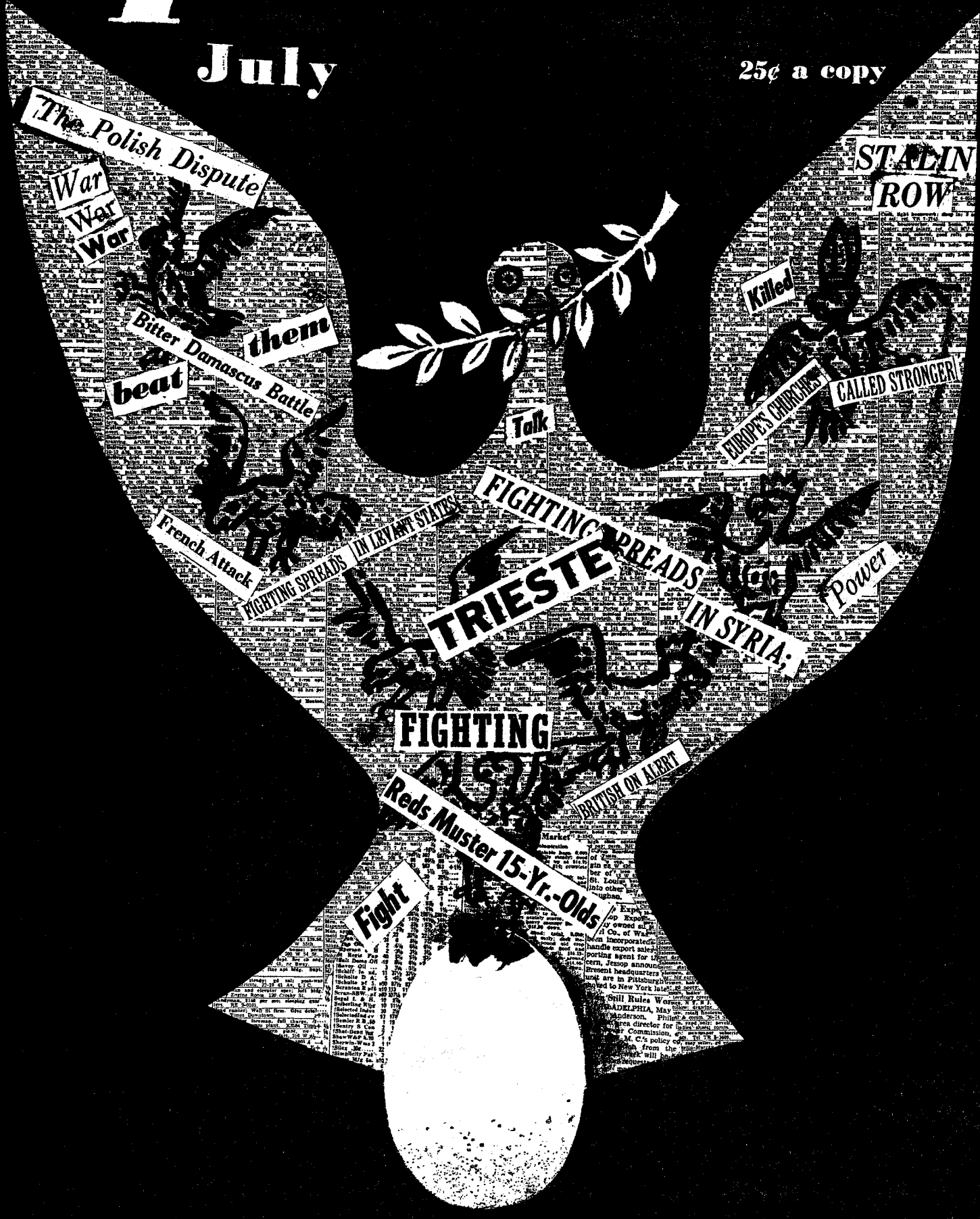
politics

July

25¢ a copy



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Contents

Cover Design, by XXX 193

Commonnonsense, by Niccolo Tucci 194

The United Nations Non-Charter, by Terence Donaghue 196

The Political Meaning of Some Recent Revisions of Freud, by Paul Goodman 197

The Responsibility of Peoples—Further Discussion (Bloom, Clough, Anthony, Franck, Cork, Clair, Macdonald) 203

FREE AND EQUAL
My Friends, by William Worthy, Jr. 209
"Black Boy"—a review by W. H. Kerr 210

POPULAR CULTURE
Memo on Disney Films for South America 211
Modesty Is a Luxury 213

BOOKS
The Japanese People—Three Basic Books 213

Revolution, Ltd., by Dwight Macdonald 218

THE INTELLIGENCE OFFICE 221

Commonnonsense

Whose Fun?

That ominous phrase. They all use it, in exactly the same words; it has become a standard formula, a cancellation clause in a contract: *"when the people are prepared and able to assume the responsibilities of national freedom as well as to enjoy its rights"*. You almost think they will give each damned member of the various peoples a pre-freedom medical and an intelligence-quiz. What baffles me is that the Big Five, who are usually so jealous of their competence over any question, should relinquish this one to the Not Yet Ripe Peoples of the world. Why ask *them* if they are able to enjoy their freedom? This is a question for the Big Five. Will *THEY* be able to enjoy it? I say no.

The Great Awareness

In one of his colorless articles in the *Times*, Arthur Krock, on the eve of Stalin's gracious concession not to veto free speech, proposed that discussion of course be vetoed at San Francisco, as Russia wanted, but that at least the problems should be PRESENTED. Just presented. Like a religious ritual. One delegate introduces the Hot Potato. "POLAND!" he shouts. Great, dignified silence. No discussion. Just awareness. Prayers on the lips of those who hope that God will intervene to "create" a discussion. Stern faces of the Big Five; a few of those more receptive to God's suggestion, bite their lips not to say anything. (Out on the deep blue Bay of San Francisco, a few white sails in the sun. . . .)

I have the solution, a constructive solution, too. A special Veto Session, to which all the representatives of the small nations come to be told NO. They gather in the big hall, with their huge "dossiers" in front of them, and first of all, right at the opening of the Conference the Big Five sing in five different but harmonious tones: NOOOOO (trumpets in the background, impressive sound-effect. The acoustics of the hall must be good, of course). Then the Big Five leave, and the small ones have a chance to read their speeches and present their cases in a friendly, unhampered atmosphere. Meantime, the Conference Hall is surrounded by the Interplanetary Police for the Enforcement of Peace, just to keep the aggressions by the Small Ones circumscribed to that small area. And of course the Big Five will send food, bedding and light reading.

F. D. R.'s Window-Display

The fate of the Oswego refugees who, according to Roosevelt's solemn promises, are soon to be dumped back into the mass-grave of the living that is Europe today (after having been confined to their camp for their whole stay here) makes one think of the gold and silver paper decorations used in the window-displays at Bonwit Teller's, which end in the garbage a few days later. Oswego was one of Roosevelt's political window-dressings. If Congress does not intervene with "exceptional legislation", the effects of the "exceptional," act of charity will be simply disastrous. In less civilized times, prisoners from far-away countries were kept for a while at the courts of the victors, and exhibited for the amusement of his concubines or children. When the curiosity of these onlookers was satisfied, the prisoners were no longer fed, protected and clothed. They were disposed of according to the customs of the land. One must say that there is something more human about that treatment than there is about the Oswego "anthrozoo". The kings of those days did not pretend to be more respectable because they fed those prisoners. They did not squeeze any moral advantage out of them. In our times even these things serve a "public relations" end. Indeed nothing is wasted, not even the by-products of the war. The historians of the future will say that although there was a difference between the utilisation of human ashes as fertilizer in Poland and the utilisation of mere human presence at Oswego, the difference is only one of degree.

Absolution

About war guilt. I saw pictures in the papers a few days ago of an American officer who found his daughter in Germany. He hadn't seen her since she was three years old, and the papers gave ample space to his description of her as the healthiest, most beautiful blond German girl. Glad for him and for her, but how come she was exempt

politics

VOLUME 2, NO. 7 (Whole No. 18) JULY, 1945

Business Manager: Nancy Macdonald
Circulation Manager: Dorothy Brumm
Editor: Dwight Macdonald

POLITICS is published monthly at 45 Astor Place, New York 3, N. Y., by Politics Publishing Co. Telephone: GRamercy 3-1512.

Subscription $2.50 for one year, $4 for two years. Add 30c a year for Canada, 50c a year for all other foreign countries. Single copy: 25c. All back issues are still available.

Special rate for service men and C.O.'s anywhere: $1.75 a year.

Copyright July, 1945, by Politics Publishing Co.

Entered as second-class matter March 16, 1944, at the post-office at New York, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from the Universal Guilt of all Germans? Wasn't she well-fed? Did she know about the horror camps? It would seem that she had been born in the U. S. Just born, then taken away by her German mother. So it all boils down to this: You are Guilty as Hell before the eyes of the Righteous World, unless your mother was wise enough to take a trip to the Country of the Free some time during her pregnancy or right before it. By this act, in which the part played by you as an enemy of Nazism stands out for everyone to see, you are Cleared. The Original Sin is, once more, having the wrong papers. O Holy Passport, Deliver Us from Evil. Amen.

Historical Bores

History repeats itself. Nonsense. What repeats itself is nothing but that stale joke you and I stopped repeating to our friends the day we noticed that they were beginning to avoid us. But what may have lost all its charm for us, poor mortals, may still retain some of its freshness in the eyes of a Statesman or a group of Statesmen, and inspire them to new, daring deeds. Because Statesmen are people with limited ideas and unlimited powers to reshape the world in the image of those feeble ideas. They will not only repeat our joke, but since everything they do is history, that too will be labeled as historical, and we, fools, will accept as wise and inevitable a thing we had already rejected as unbearable and silly. And, what is far worse, we will proceed to tell our own children that THEY must accept the tragic consequences of that once harmless joke as their "Destiny", and do their "Duty" according to their "Honor", that is, without ever attempting to use their minds, because that may be viewed as "subversive".

This is not the crazy theory of a negativist, as it may appear on first sight. It is the exact, scientific truth. Evidence:

(1) *Ye underlying joke.* (*validity expired in* 1942): Customer orders coffee without cream, waiter says he can't serve it. Why? asks irate customer, I've seen you serve it to others right now. Oh no, says waiter. That was coffee without milk. We have no cream in the house.

(2) *Ye Great Historical Event:* After sacrificing millions of young lives in the biggest war ever fought for the liberation of the world from barbarism, the Three Biggest Powers on Earth got together in San Francisco, assisted by the prayers of mankind and by their staff-photographers. The reason for their getting together: "That the heroism of our soldiers be not in vain", "that the next generation be spared the horrors of war," etc. Four long weeks of this historic event were spent in the most heated battle over the inclusion of the word "independence" or the word "self-government" in paragraph C, chapter 17, sub-provision B(1) concerning Peoples Under Protective Custody. What a suspense! Don't breathe too loud, O World! Quiet there, you Critics! History is being born.

Which means that if colonial peoples think they will be permitted to be denied independence, they are mistaken. They will have to content themselves with being denied self-government. There just isn't any cream in the house.

A Wise Measure

Speaking of Trusteeship. In Stettinius' own words: "It (the Trusteeship system) also includes the right of the people to choose some status other than independence, if they so desire".

When I read this I immediately began to think. Let's see, A status other than independence. . . . What on earth could that be? Could it possibly mean. . . . Dependence? Well, one can only say, how kind, how considerate of the Big Powers to offer a people the right to lose its rights. Under Hitler you lost your rights without having a right to lose them. This democratic way of course is better. And it is a wise measure of order, too. Imagine, if with all the difficulties one has to quell disorder in the world, imagine just for one second, what it would mean if some of the Not Yet Ripe Peoples stood in Downing Street, on 17th and Pennsylvania, or on the mother-of-pearl tracks of the Moscow subway where everything is so quiet, and began to shout, waving diapers: "We Want to be Trusted" . . . "Give us Trusteeship or give us Death!"

Stettiniana

I tried to read the full "TEXT OF STETTINIUS' SPEECH PROJECTING A FIVE-POINT FOREIGN POLICY FOR THIS COUNTRY", and here is the most constructive paragraph I found, one that actually makes you feel that San Francisco was worth praying, hoping, and buying a newspaper for:

"But, it is objected, what happens if one of the five permanent members embarks upon the course of aggression and refuses to recognize the machinery of the world organization? How can the aggressor be restrained if his own contrary vote prevents the Council from invoking force against him? In such an event, the answer is simple. Another world war has come, vote or no vote, and the world organization has failed."

Now I believe that what Stettinius meant by this was that at least there will not be a war as long as people listen to lengthy speeches and read intricate formulae of voting technicalities. We have the choice between the roar of aeroplanes and bombs and the buzz of Stettinius' voice over the radio.

Another couple of hopeful notes in the speech are these, "The five great nations have come here with the other United Nations to form an organization for peace, not to conspire for war." This, I think, is the first real secret that has been revealed to us. But then, it's true that Hitler also preferred peace, as long as he could obtain with a mere show of his armies what he wanted. After all, since the common enemy is in the end the common man, there is no reason why the three or five big powers cannot govern him, honor him, protect him and trust him, without going to war against one another. Or is there?

He continues, "Their intentions are honorable" (another military secret. However, we object to the use of that old Japanese word, "honorable). . . . "To assume that they seek to violate pledges rather than to enforce them is to oppose the existence of any organization for peace and to resign the world to an endless succession of wars." Who said that they didn't want to "enforce" pledges and many other things? Enforce is all they can do.

But the best gem of all in Stettinius' speech is the following defense he makes of the exclusive rights of the five big powers to vote themselves right or wrong in a dispute: "This provision has been criticized both here and elsewhere as giving a privileged position to the larger nations. This criticism is not justified. It is not a question of privilege, but of using the present distribution of military and industrial power in the world for the maintenance of peace." Which means it is not a question of privilege, but of privilege, because if privilege exists why ask for privilege? We would only hurt the feelings of all the peaceloving, democracy-sucking peoples in the world. We may well stand for our Sacred Principles (the few minutes we have to stand anyway) and sit on privilege the rest of the time.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Two Observations on World War III

(1) I can see only one reason why the war should end now. To wait for the new crop of youngsters who will say to us (then aging and even more bitter than we are now): "You old fools, you spoiled your victory because you had no faith, but THIS war shall be the last one, we'll see to that!" Yes, the new crop of fools. Lies too need a short rest every now and then.

(2) One nail chases another, we say in Italian. But the last nail remains. It remains just long enough for it to be forgotten that it was supposed to be the last nail, and then It Too becomes Just Another Nail, and is chased like the rest of them. Same thing with wars. The problem is not how to get rid of the enemy, but rather how to get rid of the last victor. For what is a victor but one who has learned that violence works? Who will teach *him* a lesson?

NICCOLO TUCCI

The United Nations Charter

(as not adopted at San Francisco)

1. **The members, being resolved to apply the spirit of the Charter, forego the pleasure of prefacing the Charter with a preamble.**
2. **Membership is open to countries not exceeding the size of Massachussets by population or territory, whichever is the smaller. The nations are invited to dissolve themselves into such territories.**
3. **The production of arms, the maintenance of armed forces and instruction in the business of war are suspended.**
4. **The teaching of history is limited to the period up to 1000 A.D.—all history books dealing with national history of modern states, all national monuments and national emblems are to be destroyed.**
5. **Members pledge themselves to remove all obstructions to im- and exmigration, to the free dissemination of news and opinion and to the in- and outflow of goods.**
6. **Members partake in an international commodity pool which controls the shipment and distribution of goods.**
7. **Members contribute to an international migration fund the purpose of which is to encourage migration into rich countries, to equalize the standard of living throughout the world and to direct the flow of excess assets into distressed territories.**
8. **Members guarantee college education to all and an International Education Fund finances for each individual at the age of 19 a year's stay in a country where his native language is not spoken.**

DEPARTMENT OF UNDERSTATEMENT

Washington, June 12 (AP)—Secretary Morgenthau saw Germany and Japan today as eliminated from future world trade and viewed that as little loss to the American economy.

—N. Y. Times, June 13.

PASS THE OPIUM PIPE, COMRADE!

The great October Revolution which liberated the people of Russia has also freed the Russian Orthodox Church from the chains of Czarism which impeded the development of religious ideas.

—Article by Comrade Karpov, chairman of the Russian Governmental Commission for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church; as quoted in "The Call", June 4.

The Bulgarian exarch, Stephan, a very able man, daily sings paeans of praise to Mother Russia, Marshal Stalin and even Karl Marx. He openly says Karl Marx, when rightly understood, is about the same as St. Mark and that only Russia appreciates that fact.

—R. H. Markham in "The Christian Century", April 18.

GOD KNOWS: OUR EXCLUSIVE CELESTIAL GALLUP POLL

(1)

God the Almighty has made our nation. By defending its existence, we are defending His work. (Adolf Hitler, Jan. 31, 1945.)

(2)

....The family is higher in Russia than in America, and God looking down from heaven may be more pleased with Russia than with us. (Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen in a recent speech in Boston.)

(3)

In this war, He is not neutral, and not helpless. He is maintaining invincibly an order that men cannot overthrow. Moreover, He is taking sides throughout the struggle, not with the Axis powers nor with the United Nations, nor with any government nor any institutional church or churchman, but with the impulses toward good and against the impulses toward evil in every man and every group in both camps. God is not a combatant, nor a neutral onlooker, nor a helpless victim. First of all, He is, in war as in peace, the Creator and Sovereign whose power sustains and governs, but does not annul, the activities of nature and of men. (From a report by a commission of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, as solemnly quoted in "Common Sense" for March, 1945.)

HISTORIC JUSTICE DEPT.

To the Editor of The New York Times:

Your editorial on Burma in The Times on Dec. 14 was not only friendly and timely but suggests a historic fact which has so far been overlooked. Burma was acquired as part of the British Empire under Lord Randolph Churchill, the father of the present Prime Minister of England. This was in 1885 when Lord Randolph Churchill was Secretary of State for India. The country was held much as India was held, but, according to your editorial, it is now to be given dominion status when the Japanese are completely driven out.

It will be historic justice if Burma is now returned to Britain under the son of the man who first acquired if for the British Empire. No doubt Winston Churchill will take a special personal pride—as he has a right to—in driving the Japanese out of Burma and reacquiring that country for the British Empire. Wayne C. Williams

—"N. Y. Times", Dec. 29, 1944.

FOOTNOTES ON THE PAPER SHORTAGE

By way of indicating how the trade winds blow, Simon and Schuster report the following round-up of recent printings: a fifth of 370,000 copies of the paper edition of I NEVER LEFT HOME by Bob Hope and a seventh of 35,000 of the cloth edition, making a total of 1,320,000 copies in print. The following have also gone into new printings: THE SAD SACK by Sergeant George Baker, now in its fourth edition of 30,000 copies, making a total of 110,000 copies in print; TRY AND STOP ME by Bennett Cerf, now in its third edition of 15,000 copies, making a total of 90,000 copies in print; SOME OF MY BEST FRIENDS ARE SOLDIERS by Margaret Halsey, now in its third edition of 15,000 copies, making a total of 90,000 copies in print; and MY COUNTRY by Russell Davenport, now in its second edition of 10,000 copies, making a total of 20,000 copies in print. The first edition of CAESAR AND CHRIST by Will Durant was 35,000 copies.

—Release by Simon & Schuster, Dec. 4, 1944.

Since January 1, 1943, Time, Life, Fortune and The Architectural Forum have been cooperating with the War Production Board on conservation of paper. During the year 1944, these four publications used 7,000,000 lb. (1,450 freight carloads) less paper than in 1942.

—"Time", March 5, 1945.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Political Meaning of Some Recent Revisions of Freud

Paul Goodman

Author's Note: *In the following remarks I trust that I can keep differentiated those judgments that depend on general social and cultural awareness from those that require special clinical experience, which I do not have. I am not a psychoanalyst. But the social role of analysis has recently come so much to the fore, and the new revisions of the Freudian doctrine are so politically tendentious—mostly to the right, but in one excellent case (Reich) to the left—that I feel the readers of this magazine should be informed of what is at stake.—P.G.*

THERE are at least four causes for the current enormous interest in the social role of psychotherapy. (1) The staggering number of psychological rejects in the draft both before and after induction into the army; and the even greater number of those who are suffering or will be suffering from what is now euphemistically called "war neurosis." (2) The consequent reflection on the conditions of peacetime existence that generate the "neurotic personality of our time." (3) The manufacture of propaganda for psychological warfare for both domestic and foreign consumption, whence studies of the "character structure of the Japanese" etc. (4) And more specially, the attempted analysis, particularly by middle European refugees, of the psychological framework of the Nazi state. These causes have led to new practices and new theories. What is alarming is not their deviation from the orthodox Freudian sociology and implied politics, in which a good deal is faulty, but the fact that most of these deviations lead step by step to a psychology of non-revolutionary social adjustment that is precisely the political ideal (by no means the political action) of the New Deal, the Beveridge Plan, Stalinism, etc.

1

First, briefly, apropos of new practices, I should like to comment on a recent paper by Franz Alexander, director of the orthodox Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis.[1] Dr. Alexander finds that "particularly in acute and incipient cases, briefer methods of psychotherapy can be successfully utilized," e.g. fewer interviews and repeated interruptions rather than the orthodox two years of daily analysis. This means, of course, giving up the infantile recollection. For this the doctor would substitute the "emotional training of the Ego" that "takes place in that experimental personal interrelationship between the patient and the physician which is called transference." "The goal of psychotherapy is to increase the Ego's efficiency in fulfilling its task of finding such gratification for a person's subjective needs as is in harmony with the standards and ideals of the person and with existing conditions." (The same renunciation of the infantile recollection, plus an even stronger intervention of the analyst, is advocated *a fortiori* by those who revise the theory as well as the practice.)

This position is certainly un-Freudian. "It is nonsensical," Freud said in his last major work, "to maintain that psychoanalysis is practiced if these early periods of life are excluded from one's investigation."[2] Those analysts, again, who emphasize the role of the analyst and base their treatment on following up the resistances to treatment, but who *insist on the primacy of instinctual gratification*, insist also on the primacy of the infantile scene. I doubt very much whether Freud would have called instinctual gratification "a person's subjective needs." As I understand it, the point of the infantile recollection is not merely to live out the emotional distress involved in the early associations but also to give to the Ego, thru understanding, a *control* of these associations, in order then to face the existing situation unimpeded, the instinctual drives being part of the objective situation. (Whether or not even this control constitutes a cure is a question.) There is here no question of "harmony", but of enlightened choice and if need be struggle. But it is just this concept of harmony between the subjective personality and the objective conditions that we shall soon discuss in its full political efflorescence.

But the real bother with Dr. Alexander's argument is the social reasons he assigns for the briefer treatment. First, he says, these emotionally disturbed and incipient cases are walking around active in life as foremen, laborers, statesmen, lawyers, etc. etc., and have "an incalculable effect on society." Second, "life in our machine-age is becoming more and more complex", setting up an unbearable conflict of interdependence on the one hand and competitive rivalry on the other; therefore "to help contemporary man to find his place in this structure without falling victim . . . is the great future function of psychiatry." Thirdly, in the face of the imminent huge number of cases, if the qualified therapist does not "acquire methods which can be applied on a large scale . . . there will be a fiasco of the first magnitude."

Is it possible to draw any other conclusion from this reasoning than that the goal of therapy is the smooth running of the social machine *as it exists?* What a fantastic proposal, when a society creates emotional tensions, to reorient not the society but the people! as if indeed it were possible to change the people without changing the daily pattern and therefore both the economic relations and the nature of the work. And what familiar name shall we call a "therapy" that pretends to create harmony on a mass scale? I take it that Dr. Alexander does not really know what he is asserting.

The need does exist in its millions—and there are, for instance, 250 Freudian analysts in the United States! Given all schools of psychiatry and all the new methods you will

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(including the Army's narco-synthesis), there will be a fiasco; but the society that has maneuvered itself into two world wars is used to fiascos. Who can deny that the only practical mass method is to strike at the institutions and inhibiting mores and to give our sick generation, if not an era of peace, at least a war of liberation?

2

Let us now turn to a new revisionism in theory advocated most popularly by Karen Horney and with the most intellectual influence by Erich Fromm. Many of the propositions of this school look like the ancient deviation of Adler, but their principle is different and their conclusions, as I hope to show, aim at adjustment not so much to existent society as to the kind of rationalized sociolatry towards which the imperialist nations are headed in their *domestic* policy. (Let me reintroduce the Comtean term, *sociolatry*—i.e., "religion of society"—to refer to the ways in which natural energies are absorbed, sublimated, and verbally gratified in our corporative industrial states.)

To state their position in the most general way, Horney and Fromm diminish the role of instinctual drives to the vanishing point; they find that character *directly* reflects the social pattern and that the source of neurosis is "irrational authority"; they explain anxiety, which with the Freudians they consider the central point in neurosis, solely as fear of such authority; and they regard mental health as the "free" and "spontaneous" action of "personality." I shall try to show that, from a revolutionary standpoint, even when the political slogans resulting from this position are unexceptionable—so that even sound anarchists like Herbert Read have been taken in by them—they are purely *formal;* they have been deprived of all psychological dynamism; and when we examine the concrete social applications, to find a content for the forms, we find nothing but a roseate New Deal both in peace and war.

Both Fromm and Horney are still at the stage where they find it necessary again and again to show where Freud is in error. In summary:[3] (1) Freud was too biologically-minded to understand that differing cultural patterns lead to differing character-structures. (2) He was physiological and hedonistic and traced everything to pleasures and frustrations. (3) He was individualistic and considered man as "primarily self-sufficient and only secondarily in need of others to satisfy his instinctual needs." But "individual psychology is fundamentally social-psychology — the psychology, as Sullivan would say, of interpersonal relationships." (4) Freud misinterpreted the relation between character-structure and the infantile life, the erogenous zones, etc., when he thought that the latter caused the former. (On the basis of this critique, Fromm and Horney reject the importance of infantile sexuality, the sexual Oedipus complex, the Freudian characterology and analysis of the perversions, the therapeutic recollection, the psychic apparatus of the Id and the Ego, the theory of the libido, the importance of the unconscious in healthy persons, etc., etc. Yet still they insist that Freud is their great inspirer, etc.)

Without following Freud in every detail, I think it can be shown that every part of this general indictment is either wrong or absurd. But the upshot of it is that, after all the retrenchments and rejections have been made, Horney and Fromm commence their own psychologizing with the following residue: (1) On the one hand the inherited instincts are much diminished; in a remarkable passage Karen Horney "equates" the "Freudian instincts" with what she calls "neurotic trends."[4] (2) But on the other hand there exists a "personality" apparently sprung from nowhere — for I do not think that any one would say that a speechless child had a personality, and yet they reject the meticulous Freudian history of the forming of personality from the data of prehistory and the cradle.

Now Horney and Fromm—the latter especially moved by the memories of Nazism—turn to the neurotic personality of our time, and they find the key in "irrational" authority. The threats of "irrational" authority put the "personality" in fear of his self-expression; this rouses anxiety; and subsequent behavior is the attempt to regain security by various means, for instance submissiveness, will-to-power, competitiveness, renunciation, suffering, etc.[5] Let me quote:

> Freud states that the Oedipus complex is justifiably regarded as the kernel of neurosis. I believe that the statement is the most fundamental one which can be made about the origin of neurosis, but I think it needs to be qualified and reinterpreted in a frame of reference different from the one Freud had in mind. What Freud meant in his statement was this: because of the sexual desire the little boy, let us say, has for his mother, he becomes the rival of his father, and the neurotic development consists in the failure to cope with the anxiety rooted in this rivalry in a satisfactory way. I believe that Freud touched upon the most elementary root of neurosis in pointing to the conflict between the child and parental authority and the failure of the child to solve this conflict satisfactorily. But I do not think that this conflict is brought about by the sexual rivalry, but that it results from the child's reaction to the pressure of parental authority, the child's fear of it and submission to it. Before I go on elaborating this point, I should like to differentiate between two kinds of authority. One is objective, based on the competency of the person in authority to function properly with respect to the task of guidance he has to perform. This kind of authority may be called rational authority. In contrast to it is what may be called irrational authority, which is based on the power which the authority has over those subjected to it and on the fear and awe with which the latter reciprocate.[6]

But why does the child *fear* the parental authority if not because he is being deprived of something? What he is being deprived of is continuous attention, breast-feeding, loud shouting, immediate elimination, the opportunity of being continually present and prying, (later) masturbation, etc. All this is the motor of the Oedipus complex, but it is the instinctual life from which these authors resolutely turn away. To Freud the "root" is not in the rivalry, but in the repression, as is proved by his repeated statement that in every psychoneurosis there is a core of *actual-neurosis,* the term applied to anxiety that is the direct transformation of repressed libido.[7] Consider a child in a tantrum: would one say that this is fear or rage at frustration? It is just the energy of the frustration that explains the energy of the fear. One does not see that a small child fears a big man with a gruff voice any more than he would a tree, until he comes to associate the image with a de-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

privation. The neurotic, says Horney in a typical passage, seeks desperately to be loved because he thinks, if you love me, then you will not hurt me.[8] Yes, says Freud, but this is because it was originally the fact that they didn't love him that hurt him, and he is trying not only to be safe now but even more to make up for the past deprivation. If the inheritance of the infant, as I have been arguing, is socially colored thru and thru—and this must follow from the fact that the human child is so long helpless and yet has managed to survive — then every withdrawal of love or continuous attention must gravely wound not the personality (that comes later) but the whole body of the instincts. This is just what Freud expresses when he says that very many of the instincts are erotic; eros is the impulse of object-union even prior to the organization of the Ego.

The child's free personality, say Horney and Fromm, is endangered by the irrational authority, therefore he is anxious. On the contrary, says Freud, there is as yet no definite personality, but deprivation is inevitable by *any* authority, rational or not and whether embodied in single persons or not; the result of these very deprivations is that now the Ego, retrenching to avoid further suffering, is constituted as a closed system *against* the instincts, by repressing the instincts. Hitherto the Ego was a part of the Id, it was the agent, the artist, the informant, and the social-interpreter of the instincts: this is "the strength of the Ego."[9] Now, having repressed the instincts, and especially when it has incorporated the external authority into itself (the super-Ego, heir of the Oedipus complex), it fears the instincts foreign to it: this is "the weakness of the Ego".[9] Neurotic anxiety is the threat against the Ego by the instincts that burst free from repression.

According to Fromm, the obstacle to general psychological health is the presence, in the family and the culture, of irrational authority. According to Freud, the obstacle is the presence, in all civilization — so he thinks — of instinctual deprivation.

2 (a) The "Free Personality" as the Social Unit

What then is mental health? Practically, according to Freud, it is the opening-out of the Ego, and the relaxation of the demands of the super-Ego, sufficiently to come to recognize the irrepressible instinct as its own. Ideally—though I do not recall that Freud goes this far — it would be the opening out and flexibility of the Ego to recognize every demand of the unconscious and adjudicate its claims, remembering always that it is only an agent.

According to Fromm and Horney, mental health is primarily the absence of irrational authority; what is then given is "independent personality", a "free character structure." Since I am not sure what this means, and since it is the jumping-off point for the social philosophy, let me quote some further descriptions. It is "a person who has emancipated himself from oppressing authority, who does not submit nor is an automaton conforming to other people's expectations; he has attained the strength and integration to be himself."[10] He has "a conviction of his own integrity and thereby his identity, based on a self which is unique and indestructible because it is rooted in his own genuine and 'original' act of being."[11] (Is not this narcissism?) "The individual's greatest strength is based on the maximum of integration of his personality, and that means also the maximum of transparence to himself."[12] He is spontaneous: "Spontaneous activity is free activity of the self. . . . Only if a man does not repress parts of his self, only if he has become transparent to himself, is spontaneous activity possible."[13] (Are we to conclude from these sentences that the free person has no unconscious? This is indeed the end of psychoanalysis!) As *examples* of free character-structure, Fromm mentions artists and uninhibited children; but these examples are preposterous: what artist would say that his good work is *his* work or that, as a creator, he is transparent to himself? and what is more clear, in the behavior of a child, than that it wells from the unconscious and is not "integrated?"

But if the Id, with its dark infinity, is absent from the psychic apparatus of the free personality, where is the *content* rather than the form, of the spontaneity to come from? In Freudian terms, spontaneity — e.g. spontaneous wit—is the emergence of contents of the id called forth by and transforming some objective reality;[14] this is a process familiar to every artist. But the "free personality" is known through and through.

"A character-structure characterized by freedom." Now it is axiomatic with both Horney and Fromm that a character-structure and its attitudes can be defined independently of past causes, (e.g. sadistic-anal); and likewise independently of present acts; thus "love is a lingering quality in a personality which refers in its manifestations to certain 'objects' but which is not brought into existence by these objects."[15] Then, apart from causes and effects, what is the free character as such? It is free, spontaneous, capable of love and productiveness; it can promise and contract; it is imbued with rational faith. Freedom is— to depend on oneself. And spontaneity is—to be oneself. Love is "the passionate affirmation of another on a basis of equality with mutual respect for each other's integrity";[16] does not this sound like loving oneself?* But on what else could love crystallize if we have severed the arc extending from the unknown past through the self into the present? To promise is—to remain identical with oneself. Ah, but the proper object of rational faith is the triumph of the democratic ideals!

So it is this independent personality, this pure freedom, absolutely without a past and conceivably without a present, characterized neither by bodily traits nor by social experience, without an unconscious and transparent through and through, and with a very thin collection of instincts (for the "Freudian" instincts are neurotic trends)—it is this figment that is the unit of a free society? With what content is this negation to be filled?

2 (b) "Rational Authority" and Democratic Ideals"

Let us turn to the rational authority which is congenial to the free character-structure. It is "objective, based on

*Lest the reader think this paragraph unfair, let him ponder on this sentence of Horney: "Generally speaking, the striving for reassurance not only may be as strong as instinctual drives, but may yield an equally strong satisfaction."[17] That is to say, the satisfaction it gives is of the order of an orgasm. Can one avoid calling "personality" a narcissistic object?

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the competency of the person in authority to function properly with respect to the task of guidance he has to perform." The acceptance of his leadership is rooted in "the conviction based on their own thinking and critical appraisal of the ideas presented." Further, "there is no society, and could scarcely be one, without authority and leadership."[18]

First, how is a child supposed to decide on the competency on objective grounds? Children are certainly very astute and intuitive in assessing affection and even honesty, but this is done by emotional rapport (it is just here that adults, more inhibited, go astray); surely an objective test is beyond them: to them a rational authority is simply an authority. But secondly, when the authority is far off, hedged round with special and technical knowledge, in a system beyond any one man's experience, does even an adult feel that he can decide competency? We are recently well acquainted with authorities that on objective grounds of military expediency, or the grounds that careless public criticism might create international complications, have been unable to present their "ideas." Does the free personality still extend his trust? *for how long?* But are we to assume that Fromm is speaking of simple matters, in everybody's ken and which a frank fearless gaze cannot fail to penetrate? Not at all! "The Nazis," he says, "will presently discover that the modern industrial system is incompatible with irrational kinds of faith."[19] It is the *modern industrial system* in which a free personality is supposed to put his trust in competent authority! a system which in itself, under whatever authority, would be tolerated for a moment only by such long habituated maniacs as ourselves. Is not the content of the free character-structure becoming familiar?

There is only one kind of matter that the frank fearless gaze of a child or of a sane man can infallibly penetrate: his strong desires and daily acts. Is he hungry? sexually satisfied? is the work of his hands immediately satisfactory? It is the direct action of these immediate instincts that has the power to make a revolutionary change; there is no need to mediate these things through the formal questions of whether the authority is rational and whether one is technically free. The social cohesion exists prior to the delegation of authority. Authority is delegated *pro tempore* whether to a man or to a system of institutions. Freedom consists not, as Fromm says, in the agreement to participate as an equal member in a vast social system, even if it were known through and through (which it is not and will not be), but in the continuing revolution of new demands and ideas as they emerge from the depths, called forth by and transforming the reality, including the institutions. A free society is one that is peacefully permeable by this revolution.

"As long as mankind has not attained a state of organization in which the interest of the individual and that of society are identical, the aims of society have to be attained at a greater or lesser expense of the freedom and spontaneity of the individual. This aim is performed by the process of child-training and education. . . . It is the belief of the progressive forces in society that such a state is possible, that the interest of society and the individual need not be antagonistic forever."[20] What is the desirability, or the meaning, of having the interest of an individual and a society *identical?* But the important point is what to do about the antagonism: is there not the possibility that masses of people might regain freedom and spontaneity, full of content, by resisting the greater or lesser exploitation? In such a case might it not be, from time to time, precisely the disorganization of society, rather than the increasing organization, that is called for? Why do the aims of society *have* to be attained? I am not raising an idle question, for the answer to it determines, for instance, the curricula of different progressive schools. And is it not really an error to speak of men and Society, with a big S (I am not referring to the natural societies of families and friends), as equipollent?—for the freedom and spontaneity of men are natural, but the institutions have been made.

What, according to Fromm, is the social structure that would make possible a free character-structure? First, he says, we must have the Rights already achieved: "the fundamental right of representative government"—the Bill of Rights—and the new right that "society is responsible for all its members; no one shall be frightened into submission and lose his human pride through fear of unemployment and starvation."[21] A psychologist who lays all his emphasis on the relation of man to society, finds that representative, not direct, government, is a fundamental political act! And a progressive who looks for the end of the exploiting system finds that society is responsible for its members and not that they must learn to be responsible for themselves!

Secondly: "The irrational and planless character of society must be replaced by a planned economy that represents the concerted effort of society as such. Society must master (!) the social problem as rationally as it has mastered nature." This is the language of an anti-authoritarian. "Today the vast majority of people have little chance to develop genuine initiative at the particular job they are doing. Only in a planned economy in which the whole nation has rationally mastered the economic and social forces, can the individual share responsibility and use creative intelligence in his work."[21] This is simply false. The experience of anarchist groups, wherever they have had a chance, disproves it.[22] What he pictures is Stakhanovism. If he gave the slightest thought to actual conditions of industry he would realize that the initiative and ingenuity of the individual worker require precisely the loosening and decentralizing of the economy, which in most ways is already overplanned. "Unless planning from the top," he goes on to say, "is blended with active participation from below, a planned economy will lead to renewed manipulation of the people."[23] Why need there be a blend? Why cannot the economy be primarily and progressively managed from below, as in the proposals of the anarcho-syndicalists? (Is one supposed to think that Fromm is honestly ignorant of such possibilities?)

2(c) *The System of Sociolatry*

The method of Fromm and Horney is to empty out the soul and then fill it. It is filled with social unanimity and rational faith: "The aims of the individual and society are identical."

By deciding in principle that character-structure is the institutional pattern, rather than the effect of conflict be-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tween instinct, including social instinct, and the institutional pattern, it then becomes easy to conceive a "free society" that does not oppress the "free personalities." Easy, so long as the discussion is purely formal and juridical. But: (1) what if the political content of the structure then proves to be the Four Freedoms and "modern industrial life?" And (2) what meanwhile has happened to the revolutionary dynamism of instinctual conflict to bring about any institutional change at all?

On the one side we have the free personality: by definition it is not neurotic, for it has neither conflict nor dream. Its desires, such as they are, are transparent, for they are just what institutional approval keeps in the forefront of consciousness; another institutional pattern would alter their number and intensity; there is little in them that is natural, irreducible, or culturally dangerous. But *on the other side*, the social bond itself is nothing but the mutual reflection of these self-secure integrities. Recall the definition of love. Is not this the very picture of a small academic? Where is there a place in this hall of mirrors for either personality or fraternity?

What is rational faith?

> "To survive man needs faith. To survive in the world of the present and the evolving future, every one will need rational faith. It is only in a social order in which the democratic ideals are being more and more fully realized that the needed rational faith can develop and prevail."
>
> "In the course of the development of mankind the objects of faith have become more and more rational and have come into an increasing close relation to practical questions of social and political organization."
>
> "While solidarity and mutual obligation receive considerable stress in time of war, the tendency in peace time has been to develop irresponsible egotism."[24]

We need not go far, I think, to find what is meant by rationality, solidarity, and responsibility (where have we heard this word?): it is what the democratic regimes have more and more been tending toward on the whole, and the war-time morale that you may feel by stepping outside without a raincoat is a quite good sample.

What is the content of rational faith? it is the extension of the *attitude* of freedom. And what is the act of the attitude of freedom? it is the *attitude* of participation in the social solidarity. And what is the goal of the attitude of participation? it is the *attitude* of mutual respect for each other's integrity. . . . At no point in this rigmarole is there *ever* any content!

Meanwhile the content is clear as day: *it is the continued and more efficient working, without nervous breakdowns, of the modern industrial system, war and peace.* This is taken for granted!

Now nearly a century ago, in the time of Louis Napoleon, the heir of the revolution of '48 (yes! just as the super-Ego is the heir of the Oedipus complex)—a great man, Auguste Comte, with far more psychological inventiveness than your Fromms and Horneys, conceived of his *System of Sociolatry*, a rational faith for the spiritual organization of men, so that the modern industrial system could continue to work more efficiently, war and peace. Compared to the Sociolatry, Fromm's system is as yet a pale imitation.

3

What a pleasure it is to turn from this philistine ethical culture to a Freudian deviation to the left! I am referring to the work of Wilhelm Reich, expelled in 1933 from the International Psychoanalytical Association because of his insistence on carrying into social action the obvious implications of the original instinct theory (along with related revolutionary economic demands). This insistence has not endeared him to the Marxists either, though he is a Marxist. Whether or not one follows Reich in all his theoretic deviations—and it seems to me that, lacking in Freud's beautiful intuitive centrality among the sciences of Man, he misses the point of the complexity of Freud's discussion of the psychic apparatus—nevertheless, in what refers to immediate social agitation, he applies what is so fundamental and undeniable in Freud to evils that are so glaring in society, that one must agree absolutely. Considering the appalling proportion of neurosis on any criterion, and which on his own criterion of "true orgastic potency" and the orgasm reflex includes the *vast majority of the population*,[25] Reich shows the futility of medical treatment of a few cases; he argues that analysts who do not lend their authority to immediate general sex-liberation in education, morals, and marriage, are no true doctors. He demonstrates in case reports that persons restored to sexual health and animal spirits simply will not tolerate the mechanical and routine jobs they have been working at, but turn (at whatever general inconvenience) to work that is spontaneous and directly meaningful.

> "If the work in which they were engaged lent itself to the absorption of real interest, they blossomed out. If, however, their work was mechanical as e.g. that of an employee, a merchant, or a clerk, it became an almost unbearable burden. The difficulty which now made its appearance was hard to overcome. For the world was not geared to a consideration of human interest in work. Teachers who, though liberal, had not been particularly critical of present-day education, began to feel the usual manner of handling children as painful and intolerable."
>
> "The changes occurring in my patients were both positively and negatively ambiguous. Their new attitude seemed to follow laws which had nothing in common with the usual moral concepts and demands, laws which were new to me. The picture presented at the end by all of them was that of *a different kind of society*."
>
> "The individual with a 'moral' structure appears to follow the rigid laws of the moral world; in fact he only adjusts outwardly and rebels inwardly. Thus he is exposed in the highest degree to an unconscious compulsive and impulsive anti-sociality. The healthy self-regulated individual does not adjust himself to the irrational part of the world and insists on his natural rights."[26]

He concludes that the repression of infantile and adolescent sexuality by family, school, and church, and by such conditions as inadequate housing and economically forced abstinence, is *the direct cause of the submissiveness of the people to present political rule of whatever kind*; but that unrepressed people will provide for themselves a society that is peaceable and orderly enough; more generally,

> "The participation of the industrial workers in the *management* of production and distribution, in con-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trast to a representation of their interests by parties or trade unions, in which the workers themselves remain passive."[27]

How does he come to all this?

First he returns to Freud's original observation of the libido-economy: *the energy of anxiety is the energy of repressed sexuality.* In the condition of actual-neurosis (brought on e.g. by habitual interrupted coition or a sudden renunciation of masturbation) it is the entire cause of the anxiety, and in every psychoneurosis there is a core of actual-neurosis. This is the position that Freud later declared to be, not false, but of secondary importance,[28] when he came to lay the emphasis on the fearful perception of the punishing authority and the systematizing of the Ego against the instincts (and Horney, as we have seen, took this second position and left out the cause of the fear). But Reich argues as follows: it is the *core of actual-anxiety* that makes vivid the anticipation of punishment, for one cannot have a vivid *image* without a source of energy from within; then the fearful anticipation leads to a repetition of the inhibition and this of course redoubles the actual-anxiety, and so forth; thus, actual-neurosis leads to psychoneurosis.

To turn the fright of a really experienced punishment into an habitual state of fearfulness and submissiveness takes very little deprivation to begin with, *unless the circle is broken by positive gratification.* It is not sufficient to reduce the unconscious associations; unless the patient has positive sexual satisfaction, if only by masturbation, the cycle of anxiety will recommence. To avoid the inner tension and the anxiety, the child then tenses his muscles and holds his breath and literally constructs a character-armor against his sexuality: this becomes, as many thickness as are added, the "moral character" described above.[29] Therefore, by an analysis of character and neurosis, we see how Reich must be led to consider the vast majority as sick, and to hold that there must be a revolution in morals and economy, perhaps especially with regard to adolescence, for it is then that the instincts resurge through the armor and give the possibility of real gratification. Likewise, in medical therapy itself Reich adds to the Freudian goal of uncovering and reliving the conflicts, the absolute need of actively effectuating orgastic potency and gratification. A moment's reflection will show how profoundly this must alter the role of the physician.

(In order to base a "different kind of society" on instinctual liberation alone, Reich gives a picture of the instinctual life which, it seems to me, is excessively simple and Rousseauian. But *at the present moment* this picture is perfectly adequate as a kind of "minimum demand" that broad masses can unite on.)

4

Let me summarize the argument of this essay: I have tried to show how, in the present situation of admitted mass neurosis, three different theories of neurosis directly imply three different political philosophies:

1. HORNEY-FROMM: The core of neurosis is the defeat of personality in the conflict with irrational authority; therapy is the reduction of such authority; and free society is the competent rule of representatives of free personalities. The instincts are largely out of the picture. We saw that such a society is only formally desirable; that like any juridical formula it is true as a negative check, e.g. against exploitation; that such content as is indicated seems very like the ideal of the industrial status quo; and all revolutionary dynamics to bring about any change has vanished. This is the psychology of the coming sociolatry. (In Freudian terms: *erotized Ego.*)

2. REICH: Here the core of neurosis is in the deprivation of instinctual satisfaction, and the aim of therapy is to give instinctual satisfaction. Orgastically potent people will not tolerate authority or present-day industrial forms, but will instinctually create new forms. The role of the judging and deciding Ego is left largely out of account, and the instincts are considered correspondingly simple and compatible. At present, such a theory is acceptable in every *positive* detail (though not always in what it denies); it has enormous revolutionary dynamism. It is the psychology of the revolution. (*Rationalized Id.*)

3. FREUD: The core of the neurosis is the defense of the Ego against the instincts, and the aim of therapy is to make the Ego again part of the Id. Good society (as we shall immediately discuss it) is the maximum of happiness possible to the non-rational Id, whose instincts are part social, part anti-social, part inventive, part archaic; culture is an art and science of the ego as the interpreter of reality. But in fact, Freud should but does not say, such an art is possible only *after* a thorogoing liberation has set free natural alternatives to choose from. This is the psychology of the post-revolution. (*Ego as part of Id.*)

Postscript: Freud's Politics

I want to say something about the political writing of Freud.

There is a startling, almost uncanny, apparent contradiction between the therapeutic goals of Freud and his explicit political theory. His therapy is to liberate the instinct and to clarify all transferred and transformed eros to its original form. His politics emphasizes the need for repression of instinct (for even more repression than exists!) and for the sublimation of eros into the social bonds of brotherly love. But first, let us remember this: the environment of the therapy was a quiet conversation between a wise physician and a patient becoming wiser; then one might trust in reason to draw on nature. And the environment of the politics? *Cvilization and Its Discontents* appeared in 1929, when the Nazis were getting their forces; when it was clear that the Russian revolution, for which Freud had had high hopes[30] was failing *from within;* when war was coming, yet still there was a struggle for a formula of peace. Then Freud, an admirer of Lenin, could say that Capitalism had at least the advantage that it was a not absolutely fatal outlet for hostile drives! He was 74 years old, and we know that he was ill and tired.*

Freud was a poor observer of our culture-patterns; one feels that his experience of social facts was second hand, as if from newspapers. All the more clear was his wonder-

*The earlier work, *Mass Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego,* to my mind contains most of what is valuable in all the books on the psychology of authoritarian states.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ful central reflective feeling for the vast human culture that does not change with dynasties, but must be read in anthropology and the history of religions. Of course, by serious standards, he was not a scholar at all; I am not attempting to say that his speculations are correct; but that he knew, unlearned, by genius, the *kinds* of facts that were relevant, and the *weights* to be assigned; so that serious scholars employ Freud's cataegories. Now this kind of wisdom is useless in the practical affairs of the world, as things are; now there are crying abuses and we must turn to Reich. But they will be invaluable when one day there is peace and nature, just as they are invaluable today to artists and poets, who work with inner peace and nature. Then the problems of politics will be to increase the richness and deepen the color of happiness (the very happiness of which Freud despaired); then there will be no use for the simple formulas of a Reich, and we must turn to Freud. Let me give an example. Reich says we are to trust our liberated love: this will make a "society of a different kind". Good! True! But consider, for instance the case of Oedipus and sibling incest. Could there be a very elaborate culture if great masses of the people were incestuous and cemented with complete satisfaction the ties that already bind them so close to home? would they ever then really stir abroad? This great privilege of gods and pharaohs must perhaps then *not* be trusted, but sublimated: "The most maiming wound", says Freud, "ever inflicted through the ages on the erotic life of man". "Culture", says Freud, "obeys the laws of psychological economic necessity in making restrictions, for it obtains the great part of the mental energy it needs by subtracting it from sexuality. Culture behaves toward sexuality like a tribe in a population that has gained the upper hand and is exploiting the rest to its own advantage. Fear of a revolt among the oppressed then becomes the motive for even stricter regulation".[31] This is not the wisdom needed today, but is it not useful for a people who are rational and natural *enough*, and want to live better still?

There is still another melancholy reason for the defects in Freud's political thought and action. He was the father of the psychoanalytical movement, — how much a loving but somewhat awesome father one may surmise by the violence and hostility with which some analysts broke with him (like Adler); the euphemistic laudations of others (like Horney) at the very time that they are turning everything upside down; and the touching reverence of others who try to prove they agree even when they disagree (like Reich). From the beginning psychoanalysis was the object of bitter attacks and personal slanders by the whole barrage of the social institutions it undermined. Freud protected his child; it was inevitable that he would over-protect it, imagining that it could survive by caution rather than by standing witness to the truth. Even when he was over eighty years old (1938), he was afraid to publish *Moses* in Vienna, lest the *Catholic Church* withdraw its "support" and crush the movement![32] This by the author of *The Future of an Illusion!* Would one not say that he was demented? Shame not on Freud, but shame on the world for bringing their old teacher to this confusion!

REFERENCES

1. "New Perspectives in Psychotherapy", *The New Republic*, Jan. 8, 1945.
2. "Moses and Monotheism" (1939), p. 114.
3. This summary is from E. Fromm "Escape from Freedom", pp.290 ff., but it is identical in Horney's "New Ways in Psychoanalysis" passim.
4. "New Ways", p. 77.
5. These devices to regain security constitute the successive chapters of K. Horney "The Neurotic Personality of our Time".
6. Fromm: "Individual and Social Origins of Neurosis, *Am. Soc. Rev.*, August 1944, p. 381.
7. E.g. "The Interpretation of Dreams", 3rd English Edition, (1933) p. 165.
8. "Neurotic Personality", p. 96.
9. Freud "The Problem of Anxiety", p. 29.
10. Fromm "Faith as a Character Trait", in *Psychiatry*, V, 3, Aug. 1942.
11. ibid.
12. "Escape from Freedom" p. 249.
13. ibid., p. 258.
14. Freud "On Wit", Ch. 6
15. "Faith as a Character Trait".
16. ibid.
17. "The Neurotic Personality of our Time" p. 105.
18. "Faith as a Character Trait". And see likewise, "Individual and Social Origins"; these two papers are complementary.
19. ibid.
20. "Individual and Social Origins", p. 381 and p. 384.
21. "Escape", pp. 271 ff.
22. E.g. cf. "The Spanish Labyrinth" by Gerald Brenan.
23. "Escape", p. 275.
24. "Faith".
25. Wilhelm Reich "The Function of the Orgasm" (1942), p. 169.
26. ibid., pp. 150-6.
27. "Living Productive Power", *Journ of Sex Economy*, Oct. 1944, p.161.
28. "The Problem of Anxiety", p. 105.
29. "Function", pp. 109-129.
30. "Function", p. 183, but cf. "Civilization and its Discontents", pp. 87 ff.
31. "Civilization", p. 74.
32. "Moses", p. 85.

The Responsibility of Peoples

Further Discussion

1. The "Rationality" of the Death Camps

I should like to comment on one issue raised by your valuable pamphlet, *The Responsibility of Peoples*.. You state in the section entitled "The German war crimes are unique," that there is no "reason of policy or advantage" for the massacre of the Jews by the Nazis. The massacre does not seem to have the kind of "rational" justification that may be claimed, for example, for the bombing of cities in war. The explanation you offer is "paranoia" and "neurotic racial hatreds." I would suggest that the Nazis were following a "rational" policy rather than yielding to neurotic impulses. They had two motives:

1. They hoped that, in an inverted sort of way, the outrages against the Jews would stimulate anti-Semitism, at least as an immediate effect, and that anti-Semitism in turn would create a sympathetic attitude toward Nazi Germany. In this calculation they were not only "rational" but also shrewd.

2. I am willing to take at face value the repeated statements of Nazi leaders that they would solve the national, "racial," and minority problems of their European system by abolishing bodily some of the minorities, notably Jews and Poles. That a German party should have an anti-Semitic program and wish to seize parts of Poland is not in itself strange; but, given such policies, the Nazis would

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hardly hope that these nationalities would ever be reconciled to their regime. As for the method, it was the same as the method applied to those German groups which might also be regarded as irreconcilable: total extinction. (Why is it that we generally regard the extermination of a community as inherently more reprehensible that the extermination of all the liberal or dissenting elements within it? I am lost at this point, but being less apprehensive of the survival of mankind than of the survival of enlightened civilization, the second seems to me a matter of equal concern.)

The question of the atrocities is not one of psychology but of political morality. But that is a large subject!

NEW YORK CITY SOLOMON F. BLOOM

I would like to ask further written comment by yourself on the following sentences from *The Responsibility of Peoples.* " . . . But the Nazis have not *disregarded* human life. They have, on the contrary, paid close attention to it. They have taken it for the pure, disinterested pleasure of taking it. There was no ulterior motive behind Maidanek, no possible advantage to its creators beyond the gratification of neurotic racial hatreds."

I raise this point because the above sentences have occasioned some evaluative criticism on the part of many who are currently using your article as the basis for group discussion. I feel that the passage quoted is confusing, as it stands, for the following reasons:

1. It is clear that within the structure of Nazi ideology, there was a partially defined "ulterior motive" behind the process of Jewish extermination. The very systematized nature of the mass liquidations would indicate that part of the pleasure derived by the Nazis lay in the fact that they were, by this means, accomplishing a desirable end —ridding themselves of the human elements of Europe least desirable from their point of view. 2. It is evident that this process was in some way a continuation of earlier programs of Jewish sterilization and that the two programs did not have entirely different psychopathic roots. 3. The number of Jewish people executed in the death camps seems to have increased by many multiplications as the European food problem became more acute, and as the general pressure of German war economy unearthed many Jews who became too weak under the slave labor system to be "worth their keep" in terms of necessary subsistence.

These considerations, in my mind, indicate that whatever psychopathic pleasure may be derived from Jewish mass killings, such events cannot be entirely separated as ends in themselves, without relationship to the German Master Plan. Moreover, the actual killing, as described, has commonly taken place is an extremely impersonal and systematized manner. Psychopathic, yes—but psychopathic principally in respect to the supposed reasonableness of the killings, which would make the psychosis one remove from "pleasure" in taking life.

I think that it can be argued that "The Responsibility of Peoples" is the most important analytic document yet produced during the course of this war. There is no reason why it should not serve for a long time to come as a springboard for many other important considerations which need further analysis. I hope that the foregoing criticism will suggest one such point in need of more thoughtful exploration.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. GORDON H. CLOUGH

Comment:—

In writing of the "pleasure" the Nazis derived from taking the lives of the Jews, I did not mean that the actual operation of the camps produced this "neurotic gratification"; I agree with Clough that the camps were, on the contrary, operated in an impersonal way (as I noted in the pamphlet). It was the Party chiefs, not the guards who got the gratification. This point is discussed at length in Section 2 below.

Whether, as Bloom claims, the massacre of the Jews actually *increased* anti-Semitism outside Germany is a hard question. I have heard that one man-in-the-street reaction to the recent showings of death camp films over here was: "They must have done *something* if they were punished like that." And I have heard it argued that the very fact the Nazis were able to "get away with" killing half the Jews in Europe makes people over here think of the Jews as weak and defenceless, and thus good objects of persecution. On the other hand, a certain amount of sympathy for the Jewish victims and indignation against their executioners must also have been created. Which of these conflicting reactions, on balance, was stronger I don't know, though my opinion inclines to the latter. In any case, the calculations involved seem too uncertain to have been an important determinant of Nazi policy.

The main point both Bloom and Clough make is that the death camps were rational because they were part of a long-range program. I grant that the Nazis had a program—Lemkin calls it "genocide"—for the gradual and systematic extermination of the non-Germanic peoples of Europe by executions, by slow starvation, by keeping males and females apart; also that this plan was first directed against the most despised races, the Jews, Poles and Russians, and that it would later have progressed to the Latin peoples and so on until finally, perhaps around the year 2,000, a Utopian Europe would have been inhabited only by the Germans and such close "blood brothers" as the Dutch and the Scandinavians. But this seems to me merely to remove the irrationality one step: the death camps were rational in terms of the plan, but what of the plan itself?

To exterminate "inferior" peoples in order to occupy their "living space" would be a rational plan only for nomadic tribes like the Huns, who need vast tracts of grazing lands unencumbered by occupants. But the Germans were not such a people, nor do I think the Nazis, for all their Wotan-talk, really envisaged a future life in goatskin huts without bathtubs, radios and *autobahns.* As a non-nomadic agricultural and industrial people, a rational policy would have been not to kill off the "inferior" races but rather to enslave them, to make them do the dirty work. For once all the Jews and Slavs and Latins and Celts had been eliminated, the Master Race itself would have had to sweat in the wheatfields and collect the garbage. So Nazi "genocide", even if the Nazi racial theories were correct, was irrational, sacrificing the material interests of the Germans for the sake of a racial animus of psychopathic origin (also, I venture to say, for the sake of a neurotic pleasure and excitement in the idea of mass extermination). I agree with Bloom that the Jews could not have been "reconciled" to the Nazi regime, but I cannot agree that for that reason it was rational to exterminate them. The proletariat has long been a threat to the bourgeoisie, the slaves in the ante-bellum South were certainly irreconcilably opposed to the slaveholders, but it never occurred to the most implacably reactionary capitalist or slaveholder to do anything so wasteful as massacring these useful "hands."

D. M.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

2. Human, All Too Human?

Guenter Reimann's reply to your *The Responsibilities of Peoples* makes a basic assumption, which is also explicit in your article, that seems to me to be Victorian and liblab. Reimann uses the key word "dehumanize" three times in two paragraphs. Why do you and Mr. Reimann conclude that the atrocities at Dachau and Büchenwald were committed by people dehumanized by Nazi propaganda? Is there not as much reason to believe that all that was necessary to permit these acts was for Nazi propaganda to remove the conditioning to which every child in society is subjected? The child is not conditioned against international warfare and hence the ephebe will show little repugnance towards the use of flame-throwers played on the enemy in the cave. In fact, all it is necessary to point out is that the young man is willing to go to war.

It would seem that a most casual reading of modern psychology plus an unprejudiced observation of children, plus the behavior of southern ladies and gentlemen when faced with a lynching by blow torches, plus the daily newspaper, should have taught us what mankind is. The SS executioners had suffered a relapse into humanity—that is what made their acts possible.

BOSTON, MASS. GEORGE ANTHONY

Comment:

This is a shrewd point which gives an opportunity to quote a striking passage from *War and Children*, by Anna Freud and Dorothy T. Burlingham.

"It is a common misunderstanding of the child's nature," they write, "which leads people to suppose that children will be saddened by the sight of destruction and aggression. . . . We often say half jokingly, that there is continual war raging in a nursery. We mean by this, that at this time of life destructive and aggressive impulses are still at work in children in a manner in which they only recur in grown-up life when they are let loose for the purposes of war. . . . If education is handled intelligently the main part of these aggressive impulses will be directed away from their primitive aim of doing harm to somebody or something, and will be used to fight the difficulties of the outer world. . . .

"In the light of these considerations it is easier to determine what the present war conditions, with their incidents of wholesale destruction, may do to a child. Instead of turning away from them in instinctive horror, as people seem to expect, the child may turn towards them with primitive excitement. The real danger is not that the child, caught up all innocently in the whirlpool of the war, will be shocked into illness. The danger lies in the fact that the destruction raging in the outer world may meet the very real aggressiveness which rages in the inside of the child. . . . Children have to be safeguarded against the primitive horrors of the war, not because horrors and atrocities are so strange to them, but because we want them at this decisive stage of their development to overcome and estrange themselves from the primitive and atrocious wishes of their own infantile nature."

The application of the above is obviously broader than to the Nazis. In every country today, civilian education conflicts with the necessities of military conditioning: the one tries to curb, the other to release "the primitive and atrocious" wishes of man's "infantile nature." The historical development of our civilization parallels the process of educating the individual: how many centuries has it taken Western culture to evolve a set of values which reject "the primitive aim of doing harm to somebody or something"! Civilized Western man has developed what might be called a "civilian" psychology. To reverse this process is one of the big problems of our rulers in this era of world warfare.

I am not so sure, however, that Anthony's point applies completely to the death camps, which were run in so impersonal and mechanistic a way as to afford very little gratification to the atrocious un-civilized instincts of the guards who ran them. The concentration camps for political prisoners, like Buchenwald, are another matter: brutality and sadistic torture were intrinsic parts of that system. But in the death camps (and I must emphasize that it was of them, not of the concentration camps, I wrote) the slaughter was actually on too great a scale to allow much individual brutality (if only because some degree of cooperation from the victims was necessary to save time and permit "production records"); the whole process had to be conducted like an *abbatoir*, and it would have been as inefficient for the butchers to torture the victims as for stockyard employees to torture the pigs and sheep that pass through their hands.

Perhaps a contrasting example will make clearer what I mean. A well-known journalist recently called the orgies staged in Milan over the dead bodies of Mussolini and his mistress "a typically Fascist spectable" and added: "Only young people raised by Mussolini would have been capable of that ghoulish ritual." Brutal, ghoulish, atrocious the affair certainly was, but not Fascist. Similar "excesses" have been committed by mobs in every revolution; they represent the upsurge of long-repressed emotions, the vengeance of the "insulted and injured" on their highplaced tormentors. Ethically, there is a certain rough justice about them, however repellent the acts themselves; psychologically, they have a healthy aspect precisely because they *do*, in Mr. Anthony's words, "remove the conditioning to which every child in society is subjected", thus affording a gratification (however morally repulsive) to instincts for spontaneous emotional expression which are given too little outlet in our mechanized, rulingclass society. The Nazi death camps, however, afford no such release or gratification *to those who conduct them*, any more than the modern factory does.

The gratification is confined to the Nazi chieftains who order the Jews to be killed but do not take part in the killing themselves; it is thus instinctually *perverse*. I recently heard the following story. On an inspection visit to a death camp, Himmler was shocked to find that the guards were forcing the prisoners to handle the dead bodies. "What! You permit these dogs to perform so holy an office?" he exclaimed. And with enthusiasm he seized the legs of a corpse and began to drag it to the burning pyre. For a long time he helped with the bodies. Finally, he stripped off his gloves and, with a ritualistic gesture, flung them on the burning pile of corpses. This apocryphal tale, deeply significant like most apocrypha, shows clearly the different psychological attitudes of those who commanded and those who carried out the program. If Himmler had been working steadily in a death-camp, I venture a guess that his enthusiasm for handling corpses would have speedily evaporated, and he would have become just another employee of Death, Inc.*

*Here I might note that it is not true, as some readers seem to have thought, that I don't consider *any* Germans morally responsible for the atrocities. Those who took part in the actual death-camp and concentration camp programs I think are responsible; and I

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Thus the death-camps would seem not to have been "human" even in Anthony's limited sense. And certainly not "human" if we include in our concept of "natural" humanity, as I think we must, instincts of love and co-operation as well as instincts of destructive aggression.

D. M.

3. Moral vs. Political Responsibility

"The Responsibility of Peoples" was a swell job. Your reply to Reimann's critique, however, contains the very questionable sentence: "But the German people have a political responsibility for Nazism, both in that they permitted Hitler to come to power, and that they endured his rule without revolt."

This kind of reasoning is widely used by liblabs who are looking for an excuse for supporting the imperialistic hate propaganda. I know you think you have drawn the line with your differentiation between moral and political responsibility. But it is not sharp enough a line. A Marxist should think twice before he speaks of "the people" in a class society. The question can only be: why did the German working class permit Hitler to come to power? There was no other social force which could have prevented it. The answer to this question would be that the large unemployment had deprived the workers of their strength and that the split between the Second and the Third International and the disastrous policy of both of them made an efficient political action impossible. The economic and the political situation was not at all a special German phenomenon.

That the working class "endured Hitler's rule without revolt" is also not a special German problem. At first how was Hitler's rule endured? In the first years of this rule hundreds of thousands leftists were arrested. Only he who has seen (as I have) the overcrowded concentration camps and jails can judge. At that time the underground worker got the bad news of the arrest of a comrade almost every hour.

Looking back at my own underground work in the thirties, I must say we fought a lost battle. There was no hope for success because there was no possibility to overcome the atomization of the working class.

The question arises whether a totalitarian regime can be overthrown by a revolution, or whether it can only fall through the "dynamic" of its own foreign policy? That is a dreadful question and much more important than all "German" questions. The Italians have endured Mussolini's much less efficient dictatorship for over twenty years. Millions of foreign workers in Germany never made the slightest attempt of a revolt and there seems to be no hope for an opposition in Russia. Considering this situation the political responsibility of the people becomes an empty word.

STATEN ISLAND, L. I. SEBASTIAN FRANCK

"The Responsibility of Peoples", was, on the whole, a fine piece of groundbreaking. However, your answer to Guenter Reimann's objections was distinctly a less convincing performance.

You say there, " . . . If, for example, one applauds the Spanish people for their heroic fight against Fascism in 1936-38, then one must also condemn the German people for tamely submitting in 1933-34. . . . "

You slide over some basic concrete differences between the two historical situations which, at the very least, ought to have led you to "heavily" qualify your rather glib generalization. The Spanish Civil War developed out of an attempt by the Fascist generals to overthrow a legally constituted "republic", whereas the Nazis came to power "formally", in legal fashion from within the confines of the existing government. No cliches about the Nazis being a class instrument for the violent suppression of all socialist, labor and democratic movements (and therefore, in essence, similar to Franco's group) can either change that fact or the substantial-qualitative difference it accounted for in the historical unfolding of the situation.

The absence of an attempt by the German proletariat to overthrow the Nazi regime hardly constitutes, ipso facto, "tame submission". The actual historical experience was too complicated to allow itself to be squeezed into the simple categoric alternatives: "Either you revolt or consider yourselves tame submitters." (In this connection one ought, for one thing, to consider the unparalleled brutality and deadly efficiency of the Gestapo.) No, this constitutes oversimplified, and black and white analysis. By similar logic, you can make the entire Russian people politically responsible for the grievous social sins of Stalin and his clique, or for that matter, all the Americans, including Dwight Macdonald, who has written some eloquent stuff against it, for Negro discrimination, Jim-Crow, and lynching in the U. S.

The whole German people were not one passive mass anent Fascism. One section of the population was completely responsible for the advent of Fascism, some partly responsible and others not at all. Neither historical fact nor moral justice warrant seeking to fasten the sense of guilt on the whole German people. (Incidentally, how do you expect them to expiate their sins? You make the whole damned thing sound like an exercise in Niebuhrian catechismetics, i.e., "Realize your original sin before you can hope to partake of grace and salvation.")

NEW YORK CITY JIM CORK

This is the first time that I really disagree with something you write in POLITICS. The last part of your reply to Reimann seems to me not only completely wrong but also in contradiction with everything you have written so far.

"The German people have a political responsibility for Nazism. . . . " Is there such a thing as collective responsibility? You know that I am far from being an orthodox Marxist, but anyone who has accepted Marx's *method*

agree with the soldier who recently wrote: "This division, as you may know, found the camp at X. I will not be able to smell anything like lime again without a slight nausea. The corpses in lime were even more repulsive than the ones they shot and left to rot; it seemed so *systematic* to pile them up in disinfected ranks. I agree with Macdonald that 'the people' are not responsible, but I think individuals who took part in the whole system of mass murder should be erased, because they are not good for anything any more. Their humanity has been eaten out of them."

While I'm correcting things—I was wholly wrong when I wrote that what the Nazis did in the death-camps was "done as publicly and proclaimed as exultantly as the winning of a great battle." On the contrary, all the evidence shows that the death-camps (not the concentration-camps) were kept a secret from the German people. The outside world found out about them in the summer of 1944, though there had been rumors before. We may be sure that had the Nazis made them public inside Germany before then, the Allied intelligence network would have carried the news outside, since it was valuable war propaganda for the Allies. It is even possible that the Germans never knew about Maidanek and Auschwitz until the actual military collapse let in the outside world. Why I wrote so false a statement I don't know; there was no evidence for it; the intoxication of rhetoric must be my only feeble excuse.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of investigation must be aware that "responsibility of a people" might belong in the domain of theology or metaphysics but certainly not in social analysis. When, in history, has a people enjoyed the benefit of a free will? Marx's whole effort has been to show that until now Man has been object, not subject of history, and that the whole aim of the socialist transformation is to allow man, for the first time, to become a conscious agent. Then, and only then, can one speak of "responsibility of people".

Your statement, if thought out to its logical conclusion, becomes completely absurd. The Indian people are politically responsible for not revolting, the British workers are politically responsible for British oppression of India, all the downtrodden of the earth, all those for whom socialists have fought, are responsible, because up to now none of the oppressed people has as yet freed itself from its chains.

What about the Tibetan whom you mention in your analysis? You say that he isn't morally responsible. But is he politically responsible? If one doesn't take into account the conditions of Tibetan social and economic development, if one doesn't consider that the Tibetan is a suppressed and degraded human being, then one would have to say: yes, he is responsible too since he didn't revolt. Could it not be that modern man, submitted to the pressure of mass organization, mass indoctrination, to an industrial system of lies and propaganda, to ideological as well as physical oppression, is somewhat in the same situation as the Tibetan? He also is in the hands of forces which he doesn't understand, which dominate him, which alienate him from his true being. Pity, not indignation, seems to be in order.

I feel somewhat inhibited, writing all this, because it seems to me that these were precisely the arguments you gave yourself originally. I fail to see the distinction between moral and political responsibility. The two are closely interwoven. Any kind of responsibility belongs in the field of conscious action of individuals. Thus it is perfectly legitimate to speak of the responsibility of the SP or the CP leadership for the coming to power of fascism, but to speak of a whole people as "tamely submitting to fascism" is an entirely different matter. Were they in a position to truly understand and evaluate the consequences of their actions?

Unless you show me in what way the American people are responsible for their not having developed a class consciousness, for feeding on Hollywood and on soapbox operas, I am not prepared to accept your line of reasoning.

(All the above does not mean, of course, that I agree with Reimann's elementary-grade Marxism; on the contrary, your answers seem to be quite valid up to the last point.)

NEW YORK CITY LOUIS CLAIR

Comment:

The first question is: can a distinction be made between moral and political responsibility? Or, put more broadly, is there a type of responsibility in which one is accountable only to one's self?

Let me give an example. An engineer builds a bridge which collapses, with great loss of life, one week after it is opened to traffic. Let us assume the engineer to be honest and conscientious; the bridge fell simply because his knowledge of the properties of reinforced concrete was not so extensive as he had thought it was. No moral responsibility can be attached to our conscientious but incompetent bridge-builder. Yet would not we raise our eyebrows if his reaction to the catastrophe was: "Sorry, of course. But it wasn't my fault. My family was poor and unable to send me to a first-class engineering school. I did my best, that's all any man can do. You can blame the authorities who hired me without sufficiently investigating my competence. But you can't blame *me*." And would we not respect him more if he said instead: "I accept full responsibility. I ought to have known more about reinforced concrete. I shall learn more at once so that this tragedy won't be repeated." More respect, and more confidence in our engineer's ability to make his future bridges stand up.

Similarly, we may have more hope that the German people can build an alternative society to Nazism if they accept political responsibility for Hitler.

Since political responsibility is something that can only be voluntarily assumed by a class or a people *itself*, something distinct from any notion of guilt or punishment, it follows that one can assign it only if one identifies one's self with the people one holds responsible. *It is a criticism made from inside*, and when I wrote of the German people's political responsibility, I was venturing to identify myself with them, and thus criticise their ("our") behavior from within. Cork points out that "by similar logic" I myself bear some responsibility for military Jimcrow. He thinks this absurd, since I have personally written a lot against Jimcrow. But I do accept responsibility, inasmuch as my efforts have been ineffectual; and as a member of that group in American society which seeks racial democracy, I say we have failed and must blame our failure on our own incompetence and lack of energy and devotion as well as on economic-historical factors. We did our best, perhaps, but our best was not good enough. And who among us can say he has done all he could have done? Not I, at least.

Franck would narrow the question of political responsibility for Nazism down to the only social force theoretically capable of stopping Hitler: the German proletariat. He seems to think it impossible that one could seriously think the workers, who were almost solidly opposed to the Nazis, in any sense responsible for Nazism. For my part, precisely because I agree that the German workingclass alone could have stopped Hitler, do I insist—speaking, let me repeat, from *inside*, from a workingclass socialist viewpoint—that they ("we") bear a heavy political responsibility. "Self-criticism—cruel, unsparing criticism that goes to the very root of the evil is life and breath for the proletarian movement," writes Rosa Luxemburg in the "Junius" pamphlet. "The catastrophe [i.e., World War I] into which the world has thrust the socialist proletariat is an unexampled misfortune for humanity. But socialism is lost only if the international proletariat is unable to measure the depth of the catastrophe and refuses to understand the lesson it teaches. . . . The German Social-Democracy has been generally acknowledged to be the purest incarnation of Maxian socialism. . . . It was the pride of every socialist, the horror of the ruling-class of all countries. And what happened in Germany when the great historical crisis came? The deepest fall, the mightiest cataclysm. Nowhere was the organization of the proletariat made so completely subservient to imperialism. . . . Nowhere was the political and industrial class-struggle of the workingclass so entirely abandoned as in Germany." Could not similar words, even more pointed terms indeed, be used of the collapse of the two great workingclass parties of Germany, the Communists and the Social Democrats, before the Nazi putsch of 1933-4?

My correspondents all object to my speaking of the German people as "tamely submitting to fascism in 1933-4" and to the unfavorable comparison with the resistance made

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by the Spanish people to Franco. Franck points to the "hundreds of thousands" of German leftists who were arrested in the early years of Hitler's rule. I would be the last to refuse my admiration for the personal heroism of these German anti-fascists—but I must insist that politically the case was this: no large-scale violent resistance was made by the German workers to Hitler in 1933-4, when he was advancing to power; there were large "private armies" of the Left which never went into action; the workers followed with docility the capitulation of their Social Democratic and Communist leaders (and, as I shall try to show below, they bear responsibility for having such leaders, too); there was no general strikes against the Nazis in those two crucial years, no large-scale riots or street fights; the Nazis were able to make a "cold" revolution and this, I think is a cause for shame and concern to concern to all of us who believe in socialism. The arrests which Franck speaks of took place *after* Hitler came to power and were the result not of any politically significant anti-fascist action by the German workers but rather of Hitler's fears of such action in the future. These persecutions showed that great numbers of Germans opposed fascism (which I have never doubted) but not that they were able to take effective action against fascism.

I realize that the historical situation was different in Spain, but it seems to me the Spanish people showed a spontaneous, active opposition to fascism which the Germans did not; so, for that matter, did the Austrian socialists who, in a situation perhaps even more hopeless than that of the German workers, gave an inspiring example to socialists everywhere by taking up arms and fighting it out with the overwhelmingly superior forces of Dollfuss. National comparisons are especially odious, however, and I should not like too much to insist on this one. Perhaps I am wrong here; I hope so; in any case, the relative political responsibility of the German and the Spanish peoples is a side-issue on which I may be right or wrong without the main point's being affected. Let us return to that.

There are three assumptions, widely held on the Left and made by my correspondents, which I want to challenge: (1) that the leadership of the workers is responsible, but not the mass of workers themselves; (2) that if there are good historical reasons for something, blame or praise is irrelevant; (3) that, in Clair's words, "until now Man has been object, not subject, of history" and so until socialism allows him to become, for the first time, "a conscious agent", one cannot speak of collective political responsibility.

(1) The usual Leftwing view that such leaders as Bill Green or Phil Murray or the old German Social-Democratic bureaucracy are in conflict with their followers, whom they control partly by institutionalized force and partly by demagogic "betrayal"—this has for some time seemed to me a one-sided approach. The other side, unhappily, is that the workers want that kind of leadership, which is to some extent an accurate expression of their real aspirations and even their immediate interests. Thus the shameful leadership of the workers in our time is to some degree a reflection of the shameful state of the workers. "Shameful" is too violent? But if we conceive of the workers—or, as I should prefer to put it, more broadly, the masses—as having the great historical mission of overthrowing exploitative class society and ushering in socialism, then why should we not all the more rigorously criticise them ("us") when they ("we") fail in this high mission? *Noblesse Oblige.* (Also, as I noted in my reply to Reimann, if we praise the workers for heroism when they strike a blow for socialism, why not also condemn them when they don't?) Clair's analogy with the Tibetan seems to me defective, since the Tibetan masses have had little opportunity to develop political consciousness, whereas Germany had been in the vanguard of the socialist movement for generations. Nor do I see any inconsistency in recognizing the historical reasons behind workingclass defeats plus the heavy responsibility of certain leaders and organizations, and also criticising the masses themselves. Luxemburg concludes her "Junius" pamphlet, which is mostly such a historical review, with these passionate words: "The war is not only a grandiose murder, but also the suicide of the European workingclass. The soldiers of socialism, the workers of England, of France, of Germany, of Italy, of Belgium are murdering each other at the bidding of capitalism. . . . This madness will not stop, and this bloody nightmare of hell will not cease until the workers of Germany, of France, of Russia and of England will wake up out of their drunken sleep and clasp each other's hands in brotherhood. . . . "

(2) Clair and Franck suggest that since there were good historical *reasons* for the failure of the German workers to resist Hitler more effectively, criticism must be mute. In one sense, this is true—and true of *all* behavior. There are always reasons, and these reasons are very important. Thus the modern criminologist thinks of criminals not as wicked or malicious persons but as the products of psychological and sociological forces; and the problem of crime is not conceived of as a matter of vengeance, punishment, or even "justice", but rather as a problem in social engineering. In this department, moral judgments have almost disappeared. This is certainly the most scientific approach, and also, in its rejection of the eye-for-an-eye code, an ethically superior one. I think any intelligent person must adopt it as the basis of his thinking. But in practice, we cannot —or at least do not—think and live wholly according to it. We blame people (and ourselves) for not behaving as we think they should behave. We condemn the Nazi torturers of Buchenwald even though we understand that they behave thus not because they are wicked but because they have been molded by certain glandular, economic, psychological and cultural forces. Similarly, Marx insisted, as against earlier socialists, that capitalists exploited their fellow-men not because they were ignorant or ill-intentioned men but because they were . . . capitalists; and hence could no more be expected to behave in a humane way (which would be non-functional) than a tiger can be expected not to kill and eat other animals. At the same time, Marx was able to become most indignant about capitalism and capitalists. This has been objected to as a contradiction in his thinking, as indeed it is logically. The dilemma is part of the old problem of Free Will, which leads us to the final point.

(3) Clair makes too much, I think, out of the determinist side of Marxism. (If he is right about Marxism here, then to that extent I am not a Marxist.) If classes and peoples respond with such predictable automatism to historical pressure, if one conceives of the exploited masses as possessing no Free Will and not being able to act as conscious agents, then I fail to see how any individual can hope to have any effect on history—or for that matter, can logically concern himself with struggling for or against socialism, since victory or defeat in the battle will come about independently of consciousness and will and as the automatic result of impersonal forces. Furthermore, if historical determinism is pushed so far, one must view with indifference any given political behavior of people, whether individual or collective, since they have no possi-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bility of acting otherwise. There is no space to go into this ancient and complex problem here. I should like only to indicate that I consider the determinist side of Marx's thinking to have been too much emphasized, with results that have been bad both morally and scientifically for the socialist movement. Morally, I regard the masses, with whom I identify myself, as having some possibility of choice in politics and hence as bearing some responsibility if they make what seem to me bad choices or even if they are unable to implement their correct choices effectively; I include myself in this responsibility, as I indicated, and do not conceive it as a matter of "crime and punishment" but rather of "self-criticism." Scientifically, it is possible that if we knew all the historical factors and were able to estimate correctly their interrelations, we could predict absolutely the future; and that in this sense, history is predetermined independently of our choice (though our choice is also a part of the pattern). But we are very far from such knowledge today, nor do I see any prospect of the human mind achieving such mastery for centuries if at all. So in practice it seems scientifically legitimate to say that nothing is inevitable, that Free Will exists for both individuals and groups.

D. M.

Free and Equal

MY "FRIENDS"

The public members participating in the machinations of the War Labor Board popularly rate as "friends of labor". That is to say, they do not subscribe to the Tom Girdler theory of industrial relations: "when a worker sticks his head up above the crowd, hit it!" But their undercover maneuvers are designed to camouflage their real and decisive function in the WLB, which is to prevent workers from obtaining raises.

Other groups have also found their salvation through "friends" rather than through the outdated method of their own strength and militancy. In barracks and desert camps Japanese-Americans have had ample time to feel grateful to the "friends" of civil liberties in peace who were strangely silent when 70,000 citizens were kicked out of house and home in war. Were religious pacifists blessed with the serpent-like wisdom of Christ as well as with his dove-like gentleness, they would be thoroughly disillusioned with the "friends" of conscience, in Selective Service and out, who manoeuvered them into establishing and financing for conscientious objectors a set of concentration camps replete with authoritarianism and racial discrimination* and devoid only of barbed wire and armed attendants with whips.

As a Negro I find it easy to transpose to the arena of race relations the minority vocabulary and outlook I have as a textile worker, and to distrust not only the "friends of labor" but also the "friends" of the black man who, unelected and unsolicited, seek so often to "interpret" the submerged tenth to the light-complexioned majority and to impose their limited concepts of justice and liberty on the American racial pattern. These high priests of Racial Understanding are endowed with little comprehension of the inner surgings of a restrained minority, essentially because they wish only to do good and not to identify themselves with that minority. Where can a better illustration be found of this pernicious do-good psychology than at a very prominent Negro college in the South where white "friends" and visitors sit in the front rows of Chapel seats symbolically separated from the faculty and students by an empty row? Hence the indignant wives of the two Southern Congressmen who were denied admission to a swanky Capital restaurant in the days when sun-tan powder was the fad, probably came closer to an appreciation of what it really means to be a Negro than do these unshakeable pillars of respectability whose impressive names bedeck the stationery of interracial organizations. However strong their avowed good will, they go so far in their interracial thinking and then detour—especially if they have unmarried daughters and sisters.

This last point—social equality, in a word—is a great stumbling-block in the thinking (?) of certain spuriously liberal and broadminded educational institutions which have reached the lofty stage of admitting a handful of Negro students. Very often the Negro's God-fearing champions on the Committees on Admissions and in student Christian organizations seem to be guided by the "Noah's Ark" theory of race relations: in a democracy there always has to be one Negro (and one Jew and one everything else). So long as that single requirement of justice is met, every other consideration of democracy in mixed relations is regarded as of little import, and we are likely to find the sole colored student living off campus in a Negro home or, when the light of interracial truth has penetrated through another tough layer, in a dormitory room without a roommate.

It is precisely because of such limitations and reservations in the minds of white "friends" that I do not regard a permanent FEPC as the potentially boundless salvation of the Negro population which certain Negro newspapers uncritically believe it to be. Granted that the fight for such legislation (though doomed already, apparently) has an educational value both in and out of Congress, the membership of this proposed body would nevertheless be composed of none-too-militant "friends" of minority groups (Negroes still remember the Jim Crow Mobile shipyard agreement signed by the present FEPC chairman!).

What then, it seems to me the Negro community should be asking as it reviews recent National Labor Relations Board developments—what would prevent a Gerald Reilly on a permanent FEPC from rising nobly to defend race-baiting industrialists who would naturally claim to be "caught in the middle" by warring white and black workers? In line with American traditions of racial justice, haven't we grounds to expect such a Governmental agency sooner or later to concoct some "reasonable" racial percentage—some Little Steel Formula, as it were—for

*General Hershey cannot be expected to solve the race problem," explained one liberal Justice Department apologist.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

discriminating employers: a percentage which would no doubt be higher than "one Negro, one Jew, one woman", but which would nevertheless accentuate racial distinctions rather than eliminate them? But perhaps, it often appears, a ten per cent racial justice, sanctioned by Government, would be enough to satisfy our top-salaried and respectable Negro leaders, who rail and threaten and haggle over discrimination but show no signs of preparing for a genuine showdown with Washington, even in the face of permanent military racism. After all, when Negro "spokesmen", in the name of "the Association", soar bee-like back and forth across war fronts and hobnob promiscuously with rulers, generals and wealthy "friends", can we reasonably hope that they will retain the provincial Harlem and GI touch?

In view of this, what substitute can we devise for the self-acknowledged "opportunism" of Negro leaders who believe in "playing around" with supporters who are "20% or 40% or maybe even 80% o.k. on the race question"—a Philadelphia Quaker, for example, whose race-relations contributions are a mere fraction of his exorbitant rents from Negro slums, or a Yalta statesman who under pressure begets a eunuch FEPC with a princely inheritance of $70,000 to smash the racist monster—"because every last iota of good will [or might it be guilt sense?] has to be exploited"? Given the structure of prominent Negro organizations and the type of their supporters, it is difficult of course to see how the leaders can make broader strides towards justice and remain employed.

Since the big Negro organizations typify the *failure* of success and show no prospects of alienating their leading supporters, it would be idle to await a call to new battle stations from the General Staff of black America. But if the everlasting silences of the White House on poll-tax filibusters and Army Jim Crow are to be interpreted publicly for what they truly signify; if George Schuyler is correct that for present-day needs the top Negro leadership is inadequate ("bankrupt" was his less polite election term); if the unholy and corrupting power of monied "friends" over Negro life is ever to be broken, then old ties must be scrapped, the stifling drag of bourgeois morality discarded, and lines reformed on the basis of a true community of interest.

Happily, once away from the efficient National Headquarters and Washington Bureaus of various Negro organizations, we discover a segment of secondary leaders steering clear of kings and remaining in daily touch with the Abraham Lincoln Johnsons and the Matilda Goulds: the Negro manager of a co-op whose enthusiastic members murder the King's English but put an A & P across the street out of business; a Negro CIO organizer who leads a wartime strike against Joe Pew's Jim Crow shipyard; a Baptist minister who walked dangerous picket lines way back when Negro leaders were water boys for the Republican party.

True it is that the generally limited background of these uncited folk does not put them in the class of sociological and economic experts, and that a Tenant League in Washington's Nigger Alley is ill-equipped to fight alone against economic power and reaction. But, as with Silone's peasants, the last remnants of truth and the final hope for racial emancipation lie in the unscheming good works—the *bona fide* mutual aid—of poor and humble blacks.

With this solidarity and selflessness to rely upon at all times, a yet untried answer looms up for Negroes even at this hour of "11:59." Without labeling it a third party as such, Professor Lynd last year appealed eloquently for a broad "people's movement, all-out and hell-bent for action". To me it seems that any movement without Lynd's passion and knowledge of the social barometer would be just another liberal group, not daring to fully embrace the red-hot aspirations of determined Negroes, and stifling, instead of embodying, the universal longing for moral light.

And what would a third-party program mean for friends-afflicted Negroes? No more unelected leaders to bargain, hat in hand, with our 20% "friends". No more leaders emerging from White House confabs with their tails between their legs and alleged "gains" in their pockets. No more truck with Army Jim Crow and phoney wars. (Our "friends" and leaders go to war, but MOW and NAACP *members* die!) No more "duration" FEPC's nor Black Cabinet jobs nor other tid-bits of justice. Instead, a new crop of leaders determined, like Arrowsmith, to *fight* success and to afford the "Luxury of integrity."

But are Negroes "ready" for this total attack on inequality and fraud? What else, my "friends", can restore our digestive systems to normalcy after an endless feast of your sour milk and garbage? No segregated diet, no matter how seasoned, can satisfy our gnawing stomachs.

If a people seek anything as vigorously as Negroes are seeking their due, they will sooner or later emerge from the wilderness to find an authentic, unsegregated path. Then will the battle lines be clearly drawn, then will the Great Confusion (which side *are* you on?) be happily ended, then will the "friends" of Negroes and of the working man turn up in overwhelming numbers on the other side—Girdler's and Bilbo's side—as the enemies they truly are.

WILLIAM WORTHY, JR.

***BLACK BOY*. By Richard Wright. Harper. $2.50**

Now that we have read *Black Boy*, which is Richard Wright's own story of his youth, we can see why Wright was able to write so convincingly, of Bigger Thomas in *Native Son*. The line between the author and his creation is less than a hair's breadth. What was it that saved Richard from the fate of Bigger Thomas? At six, he had been taught to drink liquor, to swear, to fight . . . all around him were prostitutes, gamblers, thieves . . . and his father was to desert his mother and her two children . . . at twelve, he had never had a full consecutive year's schooling. He was always hungry; lard and greens were his only sustenance. The two things that probably saved Wright were first his native talent; and secondly, his extraordinary conceit, his superb ego. "That boy is a crazy fool" said his Uncle Tom and cautioned his daughter not to have anything to do with him. But Wright could say of himself:

"The white South said that it knew 'niggers'. . . . Well, the white South had never known me. The white South said that I had a 'place' in life. . . . Well, I had never felt my 'place'. It had never occurred to me that I was in any way an inferior being."

To many people in Wright's position, there comes a test which, if successfully met, sets him apart from those around

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

him, creates powers in him and pushes him on to greater adventures. How Frederick Douglass, the slave, made up his mind that he would not be whipped any more and how he drew the blood of his slavemaster and from the blood got fresh life—that is legendary. Wright's test came from a man of his own color, a school teacher. "Well, Richard Wright, here's your speech" said this school teacher and pushed some sheets of paper towards Richard. Wright had ended his school term as valedictorian of his class and he had been assigned to deliver a paper at one of the city auditoriums. "You can't afford to say just anything before those white people that night" he explained "I've seen many a boy and girl graduate from this school and none of them too proud to recite a speech I wrote for them". Richard, however, protested and this unexpected display of manliness goaded the teacher into saying "Look mister, I'm the man who says who graduates in this school". At that, our rebel replied "Then I don't graduate" and walked out. But Richard did graduate, and he did make his speech. It was perhaps not as good a speech as the one the school teacher had written, but it was his speech; he said what he had wanted to say, and his dignity was born.

Black Boy is also the story of how America looks from the bottom of a black pit. Here are Negroes who seem to be eternally quarrelling, fighting and beating one another up. Negroes who take to religion to escape the bleakness of their lives and still others who flee to sex and alcohol. To steal from the white man is no sin; it is only taking back some of what he is stealing from you. And it is much easier and quicker than organizing and fighting. The whites are a long parade of brutes and near brutes, drunken prostitutes and people whose mentalities are so low that they find pleasure in setting Negroes, like cocks, to fight and cut each other up.

Wright's deep seated pessimism and bitterness has caused him to write: "After I had outlived the shocks of childhood, after the habits of reflection had been born in me, I used to mull over the absence of real kindness in Negroes, how unstable was our tenderness, how lacking in genuine passion we were, how void of great hope, how timid our joy, how bare our traditions, how hollow our memories, how lacking we were in those intangible sentiments that bind man to man, and how shallow was even our despair. After I had learned other ways of life I used to brood upon the unconscious irony of those who felt that Negroes led so passional an existence! I saw that what had been taken for our emotional strength was our negative confusions, our flights, our fears, our frenzy under pressure."

And this:

"And when I brooded upon the cultural barrenness of black life, I wondered if clean positive tenderness, love, honor, loyalty, and the capacity to remember were native with man. I asked myself if these human qualities were not fostered, won, struggled and suffered for, preserved in ritual from one generation to another."

But Wright need not wonder if tenderness is native to man. Humanity is a more hardy plant than he thinks. About forty pages after the above words appear, he writes of how his mother was suddenly stricken by a paralytic stroke and of how the neighbors—those very people who had no passion, no real kindness, etc., nursed his mother day and night and fed his brother and himself and washed their clothes.

Bilbo and Rankin will use this book to buttress their unreasonable prejudice. The snobbish, social climbing, bourgeois Negro will not like this book (and if he thinks he does, it will be only because he does not understand it and feels quite simply that here is "one of our own" doing something which must be supported). This is the same person who resented *Native Son* and succeeded in getting a Negro editor to stop serializing it. But *Black Boy* is a good and timely book, nevertheless, and it ought to act as an antidote to shallow optimism in race relations and on America itself.

WILFRED H. KERR

Popular Culture

Editor's Note: We are grateful to a friend in Washington, who prefers to remain anonymous, for the following memo from the files of Nelson Rockefeller's agency. It has been cut but not otherwise altered.

IDEAS FOR MORE WALT DISNEY FILMS FOR SOUTH AMERICAN RELEASE

Robert Spencer Carr
January, 1942.

I.

PRINCIPLES GOVERNING SELECTIONS

In choosing the picture-ideas catalogued in this report, the following general principles were kept in mind. . . .

3. When a complex subject is mentioned, such as "Hemisphere Defense", please understand that I do not mean that we should attempt a detailed study. Instead, we should do that for which the animation medium is uniquely suited:

GIVE ONLY THE SIMPLEST FUNDAMENTALS.

If any one wants details, let him buy a book. . . .

5. Animation, being a magical medium, has profound potentialities for evoking sentiment and awe. "Ave Maria" in FANTASIA was only a beginning. We should make full use of this quality in many of the "big" subjects suggested, creating a deeply religious feeling, and associating this with political ideals. We can have beautiful and reverent scenes in which The Christ of the Andes is seen in the background, or a huge Cross fills the sky; or, more subtly, when the voice, the music, and the *artists' style of painting* suggests a religious atmosphere . . . as when we see the Spirit of Pan-America, or of Victory, standing behind our weapons. This will put over certain ideas impossible to present otherwise.

II.

METHODS OF PRESENTATION

The 49 subjects suggested in this report will require the use of every known animation technique—and some as yet unknown. However, the important thing is not so much *how* certain inconceivable visualizations will be accomplished, but rather to make certain that the subjects chosen are politically right.

Here are a few of the imaginative methods by which animation can accomplish the difficult tasks set for it in the pages which follow.

5. WORD-VISUALIZATIONS — animated reincarnation of the good old-fashioned lantern slide, by which phrases sung or spoken are literally illustrated in sync. For instance, if our commentator says "Hands across the sea," we simply show a pair of hands clasped across the sea.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The propaganda value of this simultaneous audio-visual impression is very high, for it standardizes thought by supplying the spectator with a ready-made visual image, before he has time to conjure up an interpretation of his own.

VI. DIRECT PROPAGANDA FILMS

3. "WE HAVE MORE FOOD."

Supremacy of the United Nations in Agriculture. Show on a grand scale the immense agricultural resources of our hemisphere, and our allies. Draw sharply unfavorable comparisons with the Axis. Arouse pity and anger at the deliberate Nazi starvation of occupied countries—especially France. But draw a distinct moral at the end, almost a warning: "Food—for what? Not for itself—but food for strength, and Strength for Victory." Emphasize the importance of the Latin American countries in agriculture.

4. "WE HAVE MORE MEN."

Supremacy of the United Nations in Man Power. Compare the armies and navies of our hemisphere, and of our overseas allies, with the Axis man power. Emphasize the frightful Nazi losses in the war up to now. Make visual comparisons between the total populations of the United Nations, the number of men under arms, and our vast *reserves*. Hammer away at the fact that Germany's reserves are about gone, that Japan has few left, and Italy none. While essentially a simplified visual lesson in demography, underlying this film would be a warm feeling of *inter-racial* friendship and solidarity, aimed at counteracting the Axis propaganda about Uncle Sam's racial prejudices.

5. "WE HAVE MORE STEEL." . . .

6. "WE ARE IN THE RIGHT".

Supremacy of the United Nations in Moral Armament. This is the fourth and last in a series which should be released in rapid succession. In this picture we would briefly summarize the other three: we have the food, we have the men, we have the steel—AND WE ARE IN THE RIGHT. We show the symbols of the Four Freedoms, of the Family, of the Church. And with these symbols we transfigure our earlier symbols of food, men and steel into one great symbol of Victory. "Bless these bombers, sanctify these ships."

7. "ALL FOR ONE, ONE FOR ALL".

This film would give dramatic visual expression to the Joint War Production Plan proposed at the last Rio conference. (See clipping "A") We would hand at least one bouquet to every Latin American country by telling and showing what each is contributing toward Victory. Even if some small country produced only medicinal herbs, it would be mentioned, with the narrator stressing the importance of this contribution.

8. "WINGS OF VICTORY".

This film would glorify American Air Power, NOT as a military threat, but by showing how American air lines in South America are helping the defense effort and thus helping our Latin neighbors *to defend themselves*. Demonstrate the difficulties of communications in South America, then show how our air lines solve this for them. Stress our safety record. Show huge freight planes under construction here, for them to use. . . . "Ships of the sky that bring to you not bombs and death and destruction, but peace and reciprocal trade." Show U. S. transports being loaded with S. A. products, and stacks of money representing the sums that our air lines spend annually in each South American country—and as the climax, what we plan to spend next year. Dramatize the incredible saving of time and shortening of distance our planes make possible . . . "thus bringing us all so much closer together—closer together for Victory, and for the lasting peace that shall follow our Victory."

(Pan-Air probably ought to pay for this film, and could certainly furnish most of the material.)

9. HEMISPHERE DEFENSE.

This film could be made extremely effective in a direct political sense. We show the ring of steel defenses which U. S. A. is forging around the hemisphere, with special emphasis on what each S. A. country has done for itself. Canada should be included. As if from god-like heights we see fleets of tiny planes patrolling North and South American coasts. Island bases bristle with guns. We could then go on, if advisable, and point out what still remains to be done to make our hemisphere impregnable. We could even show from whence the attack is most likely to come, and against whom it will be directed. (The Dakar-Natal situation.) This picture could end on the note "Hemisphere defense is indivisible. What helps one, helps all. What harms one, harms all." A film like this, making strategic considerations vividly clear, could be used to soften up recalcitrant minorities opposed to necessary U. S. bases.

10. "HITLER THE ANTI-CHRIST".

This would be a powerful appeal for the defeat of Hitler on religious grounds. Exploit documentary proof of Nazi acts and edicts against the Roman Catholic Church. Re-enact atrocities. Show bombed churches, imprisoned priests, teaching of atheistic heresies to little children, and the looting of convents. The blistering commentary should be voiced by a high Catholic dignitary. . . . "But here—here we have the Four Freedoms and we must preserve them." We close on the Cross triumphant over the Swastika.

. . . . . Hence, it seems to me that whenever possible, the South Americans ought to be asked what they want, and how they would like it made.

In many cases it might be advisable to get leading South American scientists or public figures to lend their names to these films, so that the credit lines would read: "Produced by Walt Disney under the Supervision of Prof. so-and-so of the University of Brazil." First, this would greatly facilitate acceptance of certain films throughout all of South America. Second, it would be flattering. Third, it would provide a plausible and publicity-wise pretext for getting certain Anti-American old gentlemen to make their first trip to U. S. A., and thus get their eyes opened. . . .

XIV

THE CREATION OF NEW SYMBOLS

Above all, we—the Rockefeller Committee and the Disney studio—must CREATE SYMBOLS.

We need a whole glossary of new characters to express today's new conceptions — characters to take their place alongside such familiar and effective simplifications as Uncle Sam.

For example, "right now we need to create "Pan-Americana," a noble female figure, bearing a torch and a cross, subtly suggesting both the Virgin Mary and the Goddess of Liberty." (See II-I—"Personifications)

These anthropomorphic symbols have always been a great comfort to the common man, for they create in him a secure feeling that he understands the rather complex values which he is being asked to give his life to defend. Hence the high importance of symbols in morale-building, and the crucial importance of cartooning as a source of symbols.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Our studio once had a "Character Model Department" in which fascinating new cartoon personalities were created as deliberately as test-tube babies. Now we might need to revive this as "The Ideological Symbol Department."

MODESTY IS A LUXURY

Editor's Note: The following poignant document, signed "Soldier's Wife", appeared in the August 18, 1944, Tribune (*London*). *It seems worth reprinting as a reminder that not even the terrible statistical differences between income groups in a country like England or the U.S.A. exhausts the discomfort and humiliation of not having money in a money society. Nor is Soldier's Wife's experience peculiarly British, as any one who has had any experience with American clinics can testify.*

My husband is in the Army and we haven't much money. Our income is small enough for me to receive free antenatal treatment at a London hospital. I go there each week for examination and treatment until my baby is born. It doesn't cost any money. It only costs hours and hours of waiting and most of my self-respect.

The little treatment card tells me that I must arrive at the hospital each Thursday at twelve-thirty sharp. With luck I see the doctor by four o'clock.

I enter by the out-patients' department, and there in the main hall I see patients of all ages—old men, boys, females (as the notices call us), the blind, the halt and the maimed. They have many different ailments, but one disease in common—poverty. When you are poor you don't send for the doctor, you wait for him. You wait for hours on long wooden benches and you tap the bare stone floors with impatience.

I pass through the out-patients' department and go up to the maternity wards. There I find twenty or so women already waiting and probably one doctor to see them. I sit on a wooden form similar to those in the main hall and join these specimens of British motherhood. We sit slumped forward by the weight of the burdens we carry. With women in all stages of pregnancy I settle down for a wait of three or four hours.

At first we gossip together and talk of confinements. Someone describes what it is like to have twins. It is very interesting and passes the time. But after an hour we grow bored with each other. Confinements are very much alike and it's tiring to sit for a long time on a wooden form when you're seven months pregnant. We sink into a morose silence, broken by an occasional grumble about the waiting.

After about two hours it's my turn to be interviewed. An Indian doctor asks me questions. He writes down the answers in his curious foreign handwriting and I go into another room to undress.

I undress completely and put on a hospital smock. It hasn't been washed since the last woman wore it. I know that some of the women are none too clean because they smell a bit as they sit in the waiting room. The smock is not too bad though. You couldn't say that it is definitely dirty, but wearing it is equivalent to putting on another person's underclothes. It's strange how even the poorest of women dislike putting on these smocks.

Dressed in this blue and white hospital robe, I go back to the waiting room until it is my turn to be examined. At last the nurse beckons. It is five minutes to four. I go into the examination room and lie on a bed. A doctor examines my bulge and points out matters of interest to the medical students.

I am twenty-one. The medical students are young, too. They look mere boys and they're very interested. I don't object to their learning in this way. They must be trained somehow or other. But when my temper is frayed by hours of waiting, sometimes I wonder as I lie beneath their curious eyes if the young bodies of the wives of wealthy men are thus used as living specimens for the education of students of midwifery.

I suppose it's simply a question of £ s. d. Since I have no money, I give my live body as an anatomical specimen to pay for the health of my baby. It seems reasonable enough except when I'm tired.

Anyway, I must either go to a hospital or trust in the midwife. In a hospital my child will have the better chance, so I swallow my pride and tolerate the hours of waiting. When the time comes I shall display the agonies of childbirth to an audience of medical students, but it's a cheap price to pay for the safety and health of my baby.

Books

THE JAPANESE PEOPLE
3 Basic Books

It is hardly necessary, here, to labor two point: (1) *the truer notion we Americans have of the nature of the Japanese people, the better it will be for both us and them and the more humane—if one may venture such a term in connection with any phase of this war—will be the outcome of the present military struggle:* (2) *our press today affords us little information from which to form such a true conception.*

The three books reviewed below give one some idea of what the modern Japanese are like and how they have come to be so. Each one, I think, may fairly be called a model of its genre. Embree describes the folkways and social organization of a modern Japanese village; Mears gives her first-hand impression of the differences between Japanese and Occidental ways of thinking and behaving; Sansom traces the historical evolution of Japanese culture and society. From all three books one gets the banal, but in this period of racialist cartoons and propaganda rather shocking, notion that the Japanese people are human beings, whose past and present we can understand and whose culture is in some important respects superior to our own.—ED.

SUYE MURA, A JAPANESE VILLAGE. By John F. Embree, University of Chicago Press, 1939. $3.00

Few peoples have suffered such violent reversal of public estimation as have the Japanese. Presented today to the American public as slant-eyed apes and yellow rats, they were charming little men in the pre-war cherry blossom era. Some of this charm is yet reserved to their women by indulgent double standard, but the Japanese male remains a fanatic, hateful animal that must be seared with flame and sealed in the earth; his skull, stripped of flesh, is fit for ash trays and grotesque ornament. Of his life in its complex and intimate daily aspects almost nothing is known save the versions of partisans.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This book helps fill that lack in our knowledge. Its description of the yearly round of life in a Japanese village is the first to appear in English. In addition to meeting a popular need, it adds to the growing list of publications concerned with the anthropological study of literate communities. Dr. Embree (now professor of anthropology at the University of Chicago) spent a year in Suye Mura observing the behavior of its natives after the manner of the ethnographic field worker. The result is a comprehensive, dispassionate record that helps rescue the Japanese from the sad flood of journalism in which they have recently been engulfed.

Suye Mura is a village of some 1600 inhabitants on Kyushu, southernmost of the three principal islands of Japan and over 800 miles from Tokyo.

To an American, the first striking feature about Suye Mura is its great antiquity. Many men have known the small cycle of their passion upon this bit of land blocked out into meticulous, flat paddy fields unto the edges of rock and water. The rocks smoothed by human hands and the soil manured with human remains mark an ancient, inbred way of life. This age has been absorbed by the culture of the peasants, lending it a stability and a resolve common to long-settled agrarian peoples. The restrictions of feudal organization, the isolation enforced by the Tokugawa regime, and the traditions of a ruling dynasty older than that of any other nation augmented this natural conservatism, producing a peasantry of remarkably uniform values and preserving a social structure basically unmodified from that of the fifteenth century.

The Meiji restoration of 1868, effected by a growing merchant class to meet the challenge of the West, abolished feudalism and wrought certain changes in Japanese society. But these changes were least felt in the villages. And as the Japanese imperial expansion spread, the government adopted a policy of deliberate social control designed to perpetuate the subsistence standard of the peasant and the family and community patterns upon which this was based. For only a minimal subsistence coupled with maximum production could support the deadly competition of Japanese trade on the international market. There were years (they must be familiar now) when the farmers could not keep enough rice from taxes and rent to feed themselves through the next harvest, and had to eat millet, acorns, grape leaves and tree bark.

The communal structure that bears the weight of this suffering is essentially a cooperative one. There are no bosses or local chiefs. Necessary village maintenance is conducted by all households equally, without direction or supervision. Thus, every summer the Kuma river swells, washing out the wooden bridges that lead to the rice fields. When the water subsides:

"Some men go off to the forest to gather wood, bamboo, and tough vines and take them to the riverside. On the appointed day, about 7:00 a.m., one person from each house . . . turns up . . . Those who did not go to cut wood on some previous day will contribute straw for rope or matting for the bridge. Each person sets to work doing something. There is no boss, yet it all gets done without confusion."

Similarly with other functions. Road mending and the cleaning of irrigation ditches are community affairs. The animal doctor who visits the village three times a year is paid by general contributions. Neighbors help with individual tasks. For example, houses are built by the voluntary cooperation of villagers who receive food and a gift of rice for their labor. At rice transplanting, neighboring families work together on each field, exchanging labor. Loans are obtained by forming credit clubs to which all participants donate equal sums. In the event of fire, flood or death, villagers will join to assist the ailing members.

Such a cooperative village organization comes as a surprise to the reader. It is not the sort one would expect to underly an emperor, an empire, and a host of imperial armies. On the contrary, though presently exploited in a conservative direction, it is a stratum of the Japanese world that supports hopes for future democratic change. The particular link between the individual and the empire is the family.

Geoffrey Gorer has overwritten a war-designed analysis of the Japanese male showing how infant toilet training and weaning patterns have imposed themselves upon the adult personality, shaping a national character of sadistic proportions and encouraging a drive toward aggression.* Without committing ourselves to his basic propositions, and certainly not to his conclusions,† there is evidently an important relation here that remains to be precisely formulated—probably in alternative rather than categorical terms—between family and social structures. (Alternative because social structures have changed without apparent or immediate change in the family organization. The *content* of social institutions is clearly integrated in any stable society, but their form, being less fluid, may show greater diversity. It is a point we will not press.)

At any rate, the pattern of the Japanese family is clearly cohesive to that of the nation. The absolute dominance of the father, the subservience of the son, and the obliteration of the daughter in the typical family are but reduced images of ideal relations between the emperor's officialdom and their male and female subjects. Familism has been a strangulating influence in China, but distance and diffuseness rendered it tolerable. In Japan a centralized government has recognized the value of this importation. If industrialization did not free the Japanese woman or loosen family ties as in the West, this is due to the restraints imposed by government†† as much as to the resistance of tradition. The result is a paradoxical situation in which an antique (but non-unionizable) social structure subsists beside a modern economy.

Proletarian developments have, of course, occurred in the large metropolitan districts where contacts remain too intricate and manifold to be completely controlled. But the isolation of rural areas facilitated dominion. The peasant's world is normally circumscribed. Few can leave their labors to visit in town. The newspaper and radio are government tools. Nine boys from Suye Mura went to college in the last decade; only one returned. In peacetime, examinations were held to select men for a year's

*_Japanese Character Structure_, Institute for Intercultural Studies, N. Y., 1943.

†Some of these are fairly ludicrous in their Freudian extensions, E.g., "In the nineteenth century England and America were viewed as indubitably male and therefore to be yielded to and copied as much as possible . . . but in the last forty years the sex of the group has been first questioned, and then reversed . . . if we wish for decent treatment of prisoners during the war, and a cooperative population in defeated Japan after, it is essential that by every symbolic means possible we should attempt to reestablish ourselves in male roles. This means the complete abandonment of threats, cajolery and appeals to pity, which all indicate the female; and adopting instead the calm certainty of obedience sanctioned by mockery, which indicate the male."

††The article "Thought Control", in _Fortune_, Sept. 1936, gives a good description of state measures to stimulate industry and yet preclude the development of an industrial society.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

military service at the age of 20. These soldiers were the chief influence for change in the village—but they were specially educated by the army in the military virtues. The sole remaining connection with the outside are local girls who work in factories for a year or two before marriage. Though well supervised by benevolent employers, they are definitely a disturbing factor in rural society.

Against the rare opportunity for external contact or independent thought the full pressure of the state is exerted. "Education" is an important instrument. At school, "the time is taken up in singing, reading, and athletics—all three with a leaven of nationalism. No attempt is made to teach the children to think critically." Learning is by rote according to regulations of the department of education in Tokyo. ("The schoolmasters vary from the sacred word of the department only on the side of greater nationalism.") Each morning the students, dressed in uniforms, line up in the schoolyard and perform their 10 minute daily exercise to the direction of the government radio which synchronizes exercise for all schools in Japan. Upon entering and leaving the grounds, the child bows to the portrait of the emperor.

For the adult, the Reservists' Association of returned soldiers and the Women's Patriotic Association, both sponsored by the government, serve obvious purposes. Old ceremonial forms, festivities and rituals based upon the traditional lunar calendar, are turned to nationalist ends. Over all the sacred image of the emperor has been imposed. These impositions once established, no force is needed for their continuance, such is the economy of the social mechanism. There is not one policeman in Suye Mura.

Isolated, overpopulated, ingrown for endless generations, inheriting the discipline of poverty and the fatalism of too much death, the Japanese peasant has borne the enormous burden of industry and war for almost a century. It is an impossible burden. Ancestral forms can not persist indefinitely in a world in which they have lost their meaning. Japan is a country where cultural lag has become a state policy, abetted by the reaction of a people to the rejection of Oriental races by the West (the American Exclusion Act of 1924, we are told, made a deep impression with the implication of racial inferiority). But that lag is nearing its end as the inevitable consequences of economic change permeate every corner of the social edifice.

The few disturbances from without the village have been mentioned; the present war will multiply these. More significant are internal tendencies of cumulative effect. Financial impoverishment and altered circumstance have gradually led to the abandonment of many peasant ceremonies. Singly this loss is imperceptible; in a long view, it signals the disruption and eventual breakdown of the village equilibrium. Now there is one automobile and one telephone in the village, five radios, several gasoline engines. The impact of the machine is just being felt in Suye Mura. Payment with rice has yielded to the use of money. Thus does a world give way, slowly, by diminution.

Most charged potential in rural Japan is that between landowner and tenant. Of 215 farmers in Suye Mura—a wealthy village—only 32 own their land outright; the rest are tenants. Landowners, who have been attempting to withdraw this land from cultivation to profit by rising land prices, have earned the earnest hatred of the peasants. To them are linked the ricebroker and the silk company agents, who "obtain the money while the farmer does the work." The history of Japan is spotted with revolts in which a desperate peasantry has risen against this triple oppression:

"The record of agrarian risings and religious martyrdoms in the feudal period shows that they [the Japanese people] have not always submitted tamely to authority. Indeed their story tells perhaps as much of turbulence as of docility, and their fatalism has found expression not only in patient acceptance of misfortune but also in reckless disregard for life itself. . . . The very fact that social pressure has in the past been so severe and unrelenting raises a presumption that, once the course of events removes that pressure, their reactions will be strong if not violent." *

Class warfare was waged openly in Japan after the last war when Marx became a popular writer, strikes spread throughout industry and a soldiers' mutiny occurred. Rice riots in the cities were put down by the army, agitators were hung, and finally the invasion of Manchuria brought military control of the country. But the rumbling of impending conflict is heard even in distant Suye Mura. "Is it not fearful," said a local official at a public meeting there, "that in this country of ours, Communism, the thought of the terrible Russian revolutionists who killed their emperor, has been pervading all classes?"

Defeat in the present war would be the natural condition for new uprisings. However, invading Allied armies now offer assurance against this fearful possibility. Writing in *The American Journal of Sociology* (Nov., 1944), Embree has put it clearly:

"Developments toward democracy within Japan are most likely to occur as a result of internally inspired changes rather than as a result of any military occupation. In fact, the first result of occupation by a conquering foreign force will be to create a reaction in favor of the old traditional forms of government and a resistance to any changes suggested by the newcomers. Even if a revolutionary party or group were to survive the initial months of occupation, it is very likely that the occupying forces will do as they did in the Rhineland after the last war and tried to do in Russia—namely, suppress all thunder from the left. In other words, the announced policy of the United States to occupy Japan will tend to retard rather than advance the democratic process in that country."

One way or another, the future looks unhappy for the Japanese peasant.

HAROLD ORLANSKY

***YEAR OF THE WILD BOAR. An American Woman in Japan.* By Helen Mears. J. B. Lippincott Company. 1942. $2.75**

A book about life in Japan in the year 1935 is here beautifully fashioned with that attention to apparently commonplace but highly significant detail which we are accustomed to call "feminine" when it appears in the short story or novel. All the physical sensations of Tokyo life are glowingly felt by the reader: the stultifying humidity, almost too oppressive for breathing; the background of insect sounds and tomtom drumming, surprisingly punctuated by Japanese jazz blaring from loudspeakers in the streets; and visually, the gray monotony of squalid houses, sliding panels open, but without violation of privacy, since no sign of human intimacy is revealed in the barren rooms.

Many domestic features, like the last-named, give the effect of primitive tribal life, strongly compulsive, almost static in development, sacrificing all individual spontaneity for the security of membership in the group. The veneer of Westernization, which has been so over-estimated in the

*G. B. Sansom, *Japan—A Short Cultural History.*. This, incidentally, is a lovely book.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

American mind, seems to have touched only the controlling interests ("Big Business," the "Military Clique"), but these same interests, while using some Western methods in the fight for survival in a white-dominated world, are most active in continuing the "Japanese Way," forming a united front in strengthening the Emperor-cult, encouraging all the time-worn ritual, and even reviving those native customs which were beginning to die out. A fire in the neighborhood of the author's Tokyo home is put out by the efficient Fire Department's chemicals—but not without the "shobo": shouting and leaping "strange-looking figures wearing large papier-mâché masks, and waving bright banners on tall poles."

The author's contact with a great variety of people yields a few modern and "ancient" characters: the frustrated English-educated woman, rejected by both worlds; the 80-year old Warrior-Samurai, play-acting his traditionally mock-ferocious role before his smiling, coquetting wife, and his silent university-educated son; and Akiko, the author's guide and interpreter, a college graduate, her dim hopes for equality unexpectedly dashed by her Communist husband, whose radicalism found nothing illogical in the official view of woman as an "efficient domestic machine."

The feel of primitive life is also apparent in the quality of play-acting, of make-believe, which the author sees everywhere. At one of the numerous Shinto festivals, which supply almost all the recreation of the masses, the display of fireworks began in the afternoon and so was invisible for four hours to the hundreds of thousands of spectators. But in the elaborate program of events, "every sparkler was named with a poetic name and described with a fanciful fairy-tale. The Japanese could read the descriptions, listen to the boom, see the puff of smoke, and in their imagination, picture a burst of fireworks more splendid than any ever seen by mortal eye." The traditional Japanese dinner is a succession of many courses, which although differently prepared and served with elaborate ceremony, are still the same beancurd. But, as her host explains, "We Japanese are not interested in food. What is important to us is the arrangement of the bowls on the trays, the color and texture of food and garnish, the etiquette with which it is served." The famous Flower Arrangement, of which there are 30,000 teachers in Tokyo, and which the "Westernized" Akiko studied for three years, is the art of creating symbols, as a tribute to nature, or as an expression of some feeling or mood, with no appreciation of the real beauty of the flowers. Again, Akiko wears Western dress in fulfilling her duties in the author's home, but changes to kimono when she visits her husband in prison. A different role demands a different costume, with appropriate words and gestures learned by rote.

Miss Mears suggests that the make-believe evolved as a kind of defence-mechanism against the exigencies of life on their barren little island, poor in natural resources, subject to the sudden violence of hurricane and volcano. In the present "After-Perry" period, the make-believe is increasingly used by the state for its own purposes, primarily that of self-perpetuation. The Emperor, divinely descended, is the high-priest of the national religion; all Japanese are related to each other and to him. Even in the "State of Crisis," a term constantly used by the government apparently to prepare the people for war, this political-religious solidarity makes Western totalitarianism seem like child's play.

It is perhaps a sign of the strength of the "Japanese Way" that an American woman was allowed to go to so many places and to see so much. Her facts and figures about industry and agriculture ring truer than those of any of the Western propaganda machines. But of course individual political discussion was taboo, and the police were so ubiquitous that they stopped the author from dancing with some University students in her own home, since "this kind of informality between the sexes is contrary to our Family System."

The "Japanese Way," like the Western totalitarian systems, seems to rain its heaviest blows on women. Although "85% of all women between the ages of 15 and 59 were engaged in some sort of remunerative work, and could be found in all occupations," (60% of the export products were made in the small home workshops, where every member of the family did his share), they were paid half the wages men received for similar work; they had no legal rights; and their education consisted primarily of details of housekeeping and social relations, all of which had been worked out in the 14th century. "The way to salvation is only through the path of three obediences—obedience to a father when yet unmarried, to a husband when married, and to a son when widowed." To an "injured wife, when she felt wronged beyond endurance," there was permitted one redress: "taking her husband by the kimono collar and shaking him just a little!"

The book serves the excellent purpose of illuminating Japanese customs and psychology at a time when knowledge of this little-understood country is of the greatest importance to the world. Japanese life seems to be the antithesis of the Western ideal (though not always the practice) in its repression of the natural feelings and emotions of the individual, a repression so strong and so widespread that one may say it is a denial of life itself, a kind of spiritual suicide. It is not strange, then, that war, which is everywhere an outlet for suicidal tendencies, takes on special national aspects, when practiced by the Japanese: the many "suicide" weapons, the lack of prisoners, the blind continuance against overwhelming odds.

ETHEL LIBSON

JAPAN: A SHORT CULTURAL HISTORY. **By G. B. Sansom. Appleton-Century, 1943. $5.**

Sir George Sansom is one of those British civil servants, like A. J. Toynbee, who write history with scholarly authority. (He held various consular posts in Japan for years, and is now attached to the British Embassy in Washington.) It would be impossible to praise too highly the literary style—what a relief it is to find a modern historian whose prose is pleasurable!—and the sophisticated intelligence of Sansom's work; also the civilized *tone*, neither romanticising nor criticising Japanese culture because of its unlikeness to his own. The author's scope is broad: he combines a constant awareness of the economic and social basis of cultural history which makes him often sound like a Marxist, with a spontaneous delight in and feeling for art (not so common among historians of culture). Such sections as these devoted to land tenure and taxation in the Heian period (Chapter XI) and to the Tokugawa legal code (pp. 460-463) are impressive performances.

The opening of Chapter XXIII will give an idea of Sansom's literary felicity, his power of generalization, and —perhaps not his least attractive quality as a historian— his nice sense of irony:

"It is a curious fact that the ruling classes at all times and in all countries, while showing a deep concern for the moral welfare of their subjects and laboring to promote such virtues as industry, sobriety and obedience, have been only spasmodically alive to economic necessity. Japan in

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the 17th century presents this spectacle, of administrators endeavoring to solve an economic question on moral lines. They saw developing a prosperous class of townspeople who were not only absorbing the wealth of the military class but were, as they understood it, corrupting feudal manners and thus undermining the foundations of the State. This problem they attacked by what we may call the Confucian method. They suppressed, or tried to suppress, all new habits which seemed to them pernicious. They directed an inky cloud of sumptuary edicts against extravagance of every kind, refusing to believe that the luxury of one age is the necessity of the next. . . ."

If Sansom's narrative skill were up to his descriptive and analytical powers, this would be a great history. Unfortunately, the structure is somewhat inchoate and the broad outlines are too frequently overlaid by and lost in details which a more masterful narrator would have integrated into the general design. But considered as a series of studies of Japanese art, letters, religion, law, economics, and sociology in various periods, the book is of the very first rank.

What of the "national character"—if such a quasi-mythological term may be used for convenience—of the Japanese? The impression one gets from this book is of a lively, tolerant ("the Japanese as a people have displayed in matters of belief a tolerance . . . which has been rare in Europe"), practical, proud, turbulent, and intensely artistic people. (This means the upper classes only, of course, the masses of peasants being submerged as in other feudal societies to such an extent as to have left, apparently, very few traces in the historical or artistic records of the times.) The last quality is wellknown but comes out so poignantly all through the book—no wonder they consider us barbarians!—that I cannot resist one specially fine quotation: the ritual invocation, in the Harvest Festival, of "crop in ears long and in ears abundant, things growing in the great moor-plain, sweet herbs and bitter herbs, things that dwell in the blue sea-plain, the broad of fin and the narrow of fin, seaweed from the offing, seaweed from the shore, clothing, bright stuffs and shining stuffs, coarse stuffs and fine stuffs."

As Sansom notes: "A nature worship of which the mainspring is appreciation rather than fear is not to be dismissed as base and fetishistic animism, and much that is kindly and gracious in the life of the Japanese today can be traced to those sentiments which caused their remote ancestors to ascribe divinity not only to the powerful and awe-inspiring, such as the sun and the moon and the tempest; or to the useful, such as the well and the cooking-pot; but also to the lovely and pleasant, such as the rocks and streams, the trees and flowers."

This esthetic approach blends intimately with that ritualistic, magical and irrational quality of Japanese culture whose contemporary importance Mears' book emphasizes and which Sansom shows throughout the past—as when, after the bad harvest of 818 "all officials were put on short rations . . . but the priests, whenever they were called upon to pray for rain or for sunshine, received rich gifts"; or the famous discovery of a white tortoise in 732, which caused historians to change the name of that period to Jinki ("Divine Tortoise"); or the equally celebrated "cloud of five colors" which a provincial official once reported and whose appearance was celebrated by an amnesty for all criminals. In relating such matters, the author is careful to point out our own irrationality: "It is customary for occidental writers . . . to take a very patronizing line, and express either righteous horror or refined amusement at the credulity of those days. . . . But the plain student of early Oriental history had better avoid assuming the superiority of other countries and other times. He had better, for instance, remember that oracles now issue daily from the printing press, and are not without credence; that imposture and bloodshed, both on a stupendous scale, are features not absent from modern life." He is even able to look on his own national culture objectively, as when he remarks on "that deep respect for titles, that hierarchical sentiment which the Japanese seem to share with the English."

The main point about Japanese history that Sansom brings out is the persistence right up to 1868 of feudal institutions. As early as the seventh century A.D., Nakatomi no Kamatari promulgated the Taikwa ("Great Reform") Edict, an attempt to create the kind of centralized bureaucratic state which had existed in China for many centuries and which was taken consciously as a model. But, for reasons too complex to go into here, a feudal and aristocratic system suited Japanese conditions so much better that neither Nakatomi nor various later statesmen were able to overcome the centrifugal pull of the powerful feudal families. Thus Sansom tells us that whereas by the early 17th century "feudal institutions in Europe had collapsed and had been replaced by centralized monarchical governments, in Japan feudalism had only just reached maturity." In the following centuries of Tokugawa isolation, feudalism was artifically protected from Westernizing bourgeois forces. Then with the Meiji Restoration (1868) the feudal walls were suddenly breached and the West poured in with a rush. (The lag in capitalist development is even more important a factor in the shaping of modern Japan than in the case of Germany.) It is Western capitalism which gave Japan not only the technological equipment to become a big military power (and of course also the dynamic spur to war as a means of solving, or at least prolonging, economic contradictions) but also the centralized form of government modern warmaking demands. Those who now contrast "Japanese totalitarianism" with "American democracy" should reflect on this historical fact.

The interrelation of past and present is described as follows: "It is noteworthy that throughout Japanese history . . . the whole trend of social ethics . . . has been to emphasize the duties of the individual and to neglect his rights. The group came first. Loyalty to the family, the community, the tribe or the state transcended all other obligations. This strong sense of social discipline was not seriously impaired by the emergence of the Japanese people from isolation in the middle of the 19th century. It was preserved, partly by the habit of behavior so deeply rooted in the past, and partly by the deliberate choice of the leaders of Japan who, when they were converting their country into a modern state, took care not to destroy those features of the feudal tradition which would serve their purposes. Their object was to unify Japan, to increase its strength and its wealth; and they knew the value of obedience. They therefore by instinct, if not by design, fought shy of political or social reforms which might lead the Japanese people to think more of rights than of duties. They promoted and enlarged into an official doctrine the hitherto somewhat vague and unorganized beliefs of the Japanese people —belief in the legend of the sanctity of the Imperial line and in the myth of their racial history. . . . The student of contemporary history will find it an interesting exercise to speculate as to how much the people's active consent to totalitarian rule derives from ancient habits and how much it is due to recent and intensive indoctrination. On the answer to this question depends the prospect of changes in the nature of political thinking in Japan after the war."

DWIGHT MACDONALD

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

REVOLUTION, Ltd.

A Text with Comments

THE Department of Justice indicted the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party under the wrong law: instead of the Smith "Gag" Act, the Sherman Anti-Trust Act should have been invoked. The firm of Revolution, Ltd. (and "limited" is just the right word) owns the famous Trotsky patents on the revolutionary process. Its octopus tentacles stretch out from 116 University Place just like the Trust in the old cartoons. Its board of directors, headed by that Rockefeller of revolution, James P. Cannon, are frankly out to create an airtight monopoly (and "airtight" is also just right) not only of revolutionary-socialist action but also of political virtue and intelligence. Fortunately, their aspirations would seem to have slight chance of being realized—the picture of our national political and intellectual life were the SWP Trotskyists ever to "take power" is about as gruesome a nightmare as one can dream up—Cannon and his lieutenants resembling the Rockefeller crowd only in monopolistic ambition and not at all in energy and mental powers.

Last winter Cannon's Eagle Scout leader, Joseph Hansen, staked out a claim to a monopoly on political virtue in his "How the Trotskyists Went to Jail" (see my analysis, "The Only Really Moral People", in POLITICS for May, 1944). Now the party boss himself—"Trotsky's Truman", a wit calls him—has filed papers for an exclusive patent on political intelligence, in his "Notes on the Party Discussion" in the party's *Internal Bulletin* for April. These notes are partly concerned with some criticisms of the undemocratic and dogmatic character of the boss's regime which have been raised within the party by a small group the boss contemptuously refers to as "the thinkers' faction", and partly with James T. Farrell's criticisms of the Hansen article in his letter to the *Fourth International* (never printed there; see POLITICS for December, 1944, for text). They are too long to reproduce in full, but a selection will give the gist.

Dots between paragraphs indicate omitted material; all italics are in the original:

A Party for Workers

The principal reason why I am less tolerant now than before of the "Kibbitzers' Club" theories of organization is precisely the good prospect of an influx of new, politically inexperienced worker militants. I know that such workers will not stay in a kibbitzers' club. They won't talk back to the articulate smart alecks, and they won't write letters to the N.O. either. They "vote with their feet." But the new workers are more important than the old incorrigibles who think the party is a hospital for sick souls and a forum for unrestricted and unlimited self-expression. . . .

The prejudices against leadership and the fear of discipline are characteristics of the petty-bourgeois who doesn't want to be tied down to anything definite. To the militant worker, however, who has an instinct for organized struggle, strong leadership and firm discipline are the most attractive features of a party. Such a party, in his eyes, is serious; it means business—and that is what he wants.

. . . . . .

Self Confidence and Skepticism

The objections we hear to our practice of praising our party, its institutions and—once in a while—its individual members, is at bottom an expression of the capitulatory skepticism of the petty bourgeois; his deep-seated lack of confidence in the proletariat, in the party, and in himself. All petty bourgeois parties, groups and tendencies, no matter how much they may quarrel among themselves, make it an article of their creed that "no one party" can be trusted with the leadership of the workers' movement. The main lesson they deduce from the Russian revolution is that the "monopoly" of leadership by the Bolsheviks was the source of all evils. . . .

We think we are important because our ideas are going to change the world. Without this conviction we could never build the combat party which is destined to be the instrument of this historic mission. See what Trotsky said on this line about the conviction of the Russian Marxists in the depths of the post-1905 reaction—that they, a persecuted handful, were superior to the ruling powers. See what he wrote on the same theme in "War and the International" in 1914 when reaction was triumphant everywhere and "the death of Marxism" was being universally celebrated. "We feel ourselves to be the only creative force of the future."

. . . . . .

Leadership and the Leader Cult

The "leader cult" theory, as we have heard it explained lately, is a version of the anti-leader prejudice of the syndicalists which was shared in part by menshevism. A nihilistic attitude toward leadership' ("iconoclasm") is absolutely fatal to the design to organize a combat party; without a *firm, authoritative* and *continuing* central leadership the combat party must remain in the realm of daydreams. . . .

Lenin, who was in dead earnest about organizing a revolution, exalted the concept of leadership higher than anyone had ever done before. Perhaps that was his most distinctive, his most *Leninist* contribution to the theory of organizing the party and the revolution. . . .

Our party method: Not merely to learn, think and do ourselves, but to *organize* others to learn, think and do. Our strength is in our combination. The "machine" (human) is stronger than any individual can be. Team work is better than the prima-donna system in any field; in the field of party leadership above all. Those who feel themselves qualified and called to leadership must *learn how to work together* and permit no anarchistic individuals, no matter how talented they may be, to disrupt the "machine."

. . . . . .

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

An Insult to the Party

The leaders of the opposition showed a great deal of disrespect for the opinions and sentiment of the party membership. Perhaps the worst manifestation was the demand that James T. Farrell's letter be published; the attempt to impose his pompous strictures on the party as some kind of authority which the party was bound to recognize. That was a coarse and brutal insult to the party. The party would not be a party if it had not learned to rely on itself and to reject out of hand every suggestion of guidance from outside sources.

We learn and correct our mistakes through mutual discussion and criticism among ourselves. We Leninists have studied the art of revolutionary politics and organization and our decisions receive the constant corrective of the workers mass movement. We *work at it* every day. Such individuals as James T. Farrell, whose main interest and occupation lie in other fields, haven't yet started even to think about it seriously. His banal letter alone is sufficient proof of that. Before he, or anyone like him, can presume to teach us he must himself first go to school. We take our ideas and our work far too seriously to welcome instruction from people who haven't the slightest idea of what they are talking about; who mistake vague impressions and philistine prejudices for professional competence.

It is remarkable how politics lures the amateur. Every other art and science, every profession and occupation, has its own recognized body of knowledge and its own rules and standards which amateurs and laymen respect from a distance and take for granted. People who don't know the business do not presume to lay down the law to those who do. Neither James T. Farrell, nor anyone else who didn't wish to make himself ridiculous, would ever dream of intruding—with a ponderous air of authority, at that—on a discussion among practitioners of another art or profession outside the field of his own special study and experience.

But in the art of revolutionary politics and organization —which is not the least difficult nor the least important of the arts—since its aim is to change the world—any dabbler feels free to pontificate without the slightest sign of serious preparation. Dwight Macdonald is the arch-type of these political Alices in Wonderland.* But Farrell as the most cursory reading of his childish letter shows, is not much closer to the real world. There is nothing we can do about it. We can't prevent such people from committing their half-baked notions to paper as soon as they pop into their heads and then waiting for the earth to quake.

But we have people in our ranks—worse yet, in our leadership—who excitedly demand that we set aside our rules and suspend our business to listen to these preposterous oracles and even to heed their revelations. We should in all conscience object to that. That is downright offensive. . . .

---

*Footnote by D. M.: An apt description. It will be recalled that Alice is presented in Carroll's book as a normal and reasonable person who is constantly being amused, bewildered or distressed by the fantastic behavior and logic of the inhabitants of Wonderland. During the years I was associated with the Trotskyist movement, I must confess I often felt like Alice. The author of these notes has some resemblance to the Caterpillar Alice found sitting on a mushroom serenely smoking a hookah:

"Are you content now?" said the Caterpillar.

"Well, I should like to be a *little* larger, sir, if you wouldn't mind," said Alice. "Three inches is such a wretched height to be."

"It is a very good height indeed!" said the Caterpillar, angrily, rearing itself upright as it spoke (it was exactly three inches high).

First, a few words on the reaction to Farrell's criticism. For years James T. Farrell has been a loyal and devoted fellow-traveller of the Trotskyists. Although personally I think he was *too* loyal, in the sense that he should have been more awake to the undemocratic ideology whose effects he has now himself experienced, one can only admire the moral courage with which he has stuck to his revolutionary-socialist convictions while most other American intellectuals have been abandoning them. When the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party were persecuted in such a disgraceful fashion by the Department of Justice, Farrell not only lent his literary prestige to the defense committee, of which he was chairman, but also gave much time and work to it—speaking, writing pamphlets, carrying on correspondence. His letter to the *Fourth International* objecting to Hansen's article (and also to what he considered an unfair polemic against Max Shachtman in the same magazine) was obviously intended as a *friendly* criticism, not as a breaking off of political relations. Not only did the *Fourth International* refuse to print the letter, but now we see the party boss considers that Farrell has insulted the party by presuming to write it. (With characteristic prudence, the boss prints his reply to Farrell only in his party's internal bulletin, restricted to members, although Farrell's letter was published publicly. Apparently, his courage is not up to letting outsiders know his remarkable ideas on political conduct. Or perhaps he has shrewd advisers.) Result: Farrell has now transferred his allegiance to the rival Shachtman group, the Workers Party.

Obviously only the weightiest possible considerations caused the SWP leadership to handle Farrell's letter in this manner, which not only violates the most elementary notions of free thought and decent human relations but also deprives the party of its best-known sympathizer. The ethical aspect, we may presume from the above document, was not too vividly present to the SWP leadership, but certainly the *practical* drawbacks of their policy must have suggested themselves. Yet, rather than print his letter, they drove Farrell into the arms of the Shachtmanites. Any one who has followed the Stalinist movement at all closely has seen similar examples of a refusal to make even the most modest concession to freedom of criticism regardless of the practical consequences. Neither the Stalinists nor the SWP Trotskyists are usually very idealistic in their political maneuvers; they do not often sacrifice expediency for principle. Why, then, always in such cases? The reason, I think, is that these parties are organized on so totalitarian a basis that their whole structure would be imperilled by any concession to free thought. The dissenter must be eliminated—physically, when they have state power as in Russia; morally and intellectually, when they don't. He is like the little boy in the fairy tale who points out that the emperor has no clothes on; let such a suspicion get abroad among the faithful, and who knows where the thing will end?

By what road do politicians who at one time were sincere socialists, dreaming of liberating mankind, arrive at so drastic a repudiation of freedom? This is one of the most important questions confronting us today. Some analysis of the above document may, therefore, be useful; not because the document is of much significance in itself, but because of what it reveals about totalitarian leftism. The main elements seem to be:

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(1) The mystique of the workers, who are allegedly for "strong leadership and firm discipline" as against the "articulate smart alecks" who want "unlimited self-expression." This is the classic ideology of the conservative trade union leader, especially in America, and also of the C.P. bureaucrat. (The fight against Trotsky himself was waged by the Stalinist apparatus precisely on this basis, Trotsky being obviously an "articulate smart-aleck.") It is a means of discrediting in advance all criticism of the leadership's policies—and even all *consciousness*. To some extent it is true that workers are more easily disciplined and less insistent on free expression than petty-bourgeois intellectuals, but this is precisely one of the evil effects of capitalism on the workingclass which socialists presumably should try to moderate, not intensify.

(2) the justification of one-party monopoly on the grounds that not to insist on eliminating all other parties is a sign of lack of self-confidence and seriousness. (The logic leads also, of course, to the elimination of dissident tendencies *within* the single party). Leaving aside the obvious ethical objections to such a doctrine, I should say that it shows lack of self-confidence to insist on suppressing competing organizations; and also that, scientifically, it seems dubious that any party, even the SWP, can have a monopoly of political wisdom. Politics will have to become much more of an exact science than it now is, and history will have to move in much more predictable patterns than it has of late, before any group of mortals can reasonably claim to have The Answer.

(3) the confusion of a belief in the importance of one's activity with a belief that all other people's activities are unimportant. Personally, I take revolutionary socialist doctrines very seriously, but cannot take seriously the claim of any group to have a monopoly on an exclusive patent on socialism. A leftwing party which must deny importance to all other tendencies on the left in order to feel important is not very sure of its own importance.

(4) The most serious *weakness* of Lenin's political method (and of Trotsky's after he embraced Bolshevism too enthusiastically after 1917, forgetting the penetrating criticisms he himself had once made of its organizational ideas) is selected as precisely the *strength*, the main "point" of the method. "A firm, authoritative and continuing leadership. . . . The 'machine' (human) is stronger than any individual can be . . . permit no anarchistic individuals . . . to disrupt the 'machine'." How does this differ from Stalinism? From the standpoint of achieving socialism (*not* of achieving a strong party-machine), there are two objections to the above: (1) the sole guarantee of things turning out well is the intelligence and good faith of those in control of the "machine"; what has happened in Russia shows what I mean. (2) Even if leaders of great ability and sincere socialist convictions, like Lenin and Trotsky, are at the controls, they cannot withstand the immanent logic of a centralized power-machine, which is to crush all dissident tendencies regardless of the content and motivation of their policies. To see this logic at work, one has only to compare Lenin's *State and Revolution*, written just before the Bolsheviks took power, with its stirring program for the "withering away" of the State, the rotation of political offices, etc., with the measures, culminating in the Kronstadt affair, which Lenin actually took. From this experience the SWP concludes not that Lenin's authoritarian ideas of party organization should be dropped, but rather that what should go are the anti-authoritarian aspirations expressed in *State and Revolution*.

(5) Finally, the party boss develops a theory which, so far as I know, not even the Stalinists have ventured to put into writing : that socialist politics is a science like physics on which only the technical expert may presume to think seriously. According to this remarkable notion, individuals "whose main interest and occupations lie in other fields" (i.e., about 95% of mankind), are presumptuous if they dare to criticise the policies and ideas of those "who work at it (politics) every day." It is unnecessary to labor the authoritarian nature of this concept: it is really a form of technocracy, or of Burnham's "managerialism", reducing the masses to the role of passive, trusting followers of the "professional revolutionaries." Lenin described the future socialist society with the formula: "Every cook will be a politician." But the party boss tells the cook to stick to his pots and pans, the novelist to stick to his typewriter and leave serious matters like politics to the technicians. Socialists in the past have labored to awaken the consciousness of the people, to break down the distinction between "expert" and "layman" in politics—which, after all, has to do with the most vital interests of every man—but this bureaucrat masquerading in Trotsky's garments, this dwarf in a giant's robe would reverse the process.

Justly enough, the concept cuts both ways. For if Farrell had behaved according to its logic, he would not have lifted a finger to defend the SWP leaders, letting the opposing "experts" (the indicted Trotskyists and the Department of Justice) fight it out between themselves. How could a mere novelist have any valid opinion on these deep matters? Indeed, the logic may be pressed farther: if Farrell is a mere amateur (a "dilettante" Burnham would call him) with no right to be heard on political matters, what shall we say of the workers to whom the party boss refers with inconsistent respect? We may presume they have done much less reading and thinking about socialist politics than Farrell has; so what do they know about the art? Aren't they even ranker amateurs? Why, then, have they the ability to know whether the Trotskyists are right, or whether, let us say, Congressmen Rankin and Connally (who also "work at it every day", who are also experts) are right? The proper course of action for them, according to this logic, would be to let the SWP fight it out with American capitalism and not concern themselves with questions on which they cannot presume to have a sensible opinion.

We have not even yet exhausted this remarkable conception. Not only has the "outsider" no right to criticise any political aspect of the party; he cannot even make non-political observations. Farrell's criticisms involved no political *expertise* but simply the ability to detect, in his own words, "gross sentimentality, unbending rigidity, unfair attacks on opponents." He stated explicitly that he agreed with the SWP on the main *political* points involved: Shachtman's theory that Russia is a "bureaucratic collectivist" society, and my own low opinion of Bolshevism.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Thus an "outsider" has no right to have a serious opinion even on non-political matters; he has, in short, no right to think; he has, even shorter, no rights. Like the shaman of a tribe, the party boss preaches distrust of and disdain for all outsiders simply because they *are* outside the in-group. "The party" (read: "tribe") "would not be a party if it had not learned to rely on itself and to reject out of hand every suggestion of guidance from outside sources." With such an attitude toward the profane outside world (every one except the few hundred True Believers), it is hardly surprising that the SWP Trotskyists have become the Jehovah's Witnesses of the leftwing world. They make a principle out of not learning anything from anybody.

I don't see how it is any longer possible to regard such a party as anything more than a variant of Stalinism. This does not mean that if the SWP leadership get into trouble with the Government again—perhaps unlikely considering the excessive caution with which they have moved of late—one would not feel obliged to support them, just as one supports Harry Bridges against the Government's efforts to deport him. But it does mean that one would feel no greater obligation and no greater enthusiasm than in the case of the Stalinists.*

*The document cited above is, of course, not the only evidence for this conclusion. See also, for example, the extraordinary data presented in "From the Bureaucratic Jungle" by Max Shachtman ("The New International", Nov. 1944 and Feb. 1945).

I have maintained that the question of party organization and party democracy is as important as that of program. This view, which is rejected by practically all Trotskyists, seems to me to be strikingly confirmed by the evolution, or rather devolution, of the Socialist Workers Party in the last five years.

DWIGHT MACDONALD

BLUSHING VIOLET DEPT.

It can be said without any fear of exaggeration that no other political movement in history has ever faced such odds and withstood such persecution as have the Trotskyists.

—from an item headed, "GRANITE FOUNDATION OF MARXIST THEORY" in the May issue of "Fourth International", a magazine published, coincidentally enough, by Trotskyists.

OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES AND HEADLINE-WRITERS

Bombay, June 12 (AP)—Postwar trade relations in the Far East are being rewritten by B-29 Superfortresses, and India's industrial future—particularly in textiles—looks extremely rosy in the glow of fire bombs on Japan.

"Every time the Superforts hit Osaka," said a leading Indian textile operator, "I say to myself: 'There's another year free of Jap competition in the Indian textile market."

—item in "N. Y. Herald-Tribune" for June 13, headlined: "B-29's HELP INDIA TEXTILES."

SPIRITUAL SUSTENANCE

Denver, Colo.—Donald Rockwell, imprisoned CO, was put in solitary confinement in the county jail here recently. He was charged with disrupting a Sunday afternoon religious service when he took advantage of a lull to call through the bars to the minister hidden from sight: "Help get us some food."

The minister is reported to have replied he came only to bring the word of God.

—"The Conscientious Objector", June.

ONE WORLD DEPT.

One worker describes the unique experience of hearing a Yugoslav choir in the Egyptian desert sing "God Save the King" and "The Star Spangled Banner" on the occasion of the celebration of the anniversary of the Russian Revolution, as an acknowledgment of election day in the United States.

—American Friends Service Committee "Bulletin", Dec., 1944.

The Intelligence Office

NEWS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTIONARY LEFT

(The following is extracted from a letter received from a French comrade for whose reliability we can vouch. —ED.

Our friends have made great changes (since 1939) in their methods. They no longer give the impression of a little sect of intellectuals cut off from the real world. They have jobs in factories and have been able to attract a number of young workers. During the German occupation, their actions were along two lines:

(1) The struggle for immediate demands in the factories. They edited a number of underground papers in the name of the "Workers' Front".

(2) They undertook a most daring propaganda task, which gave some results, among the German soldiers.

The latter action, as one might expect, brought down repression on them. In Brittany, for instance, some sixty comrades—including 25 German soldiers—were arrested, deported or shot. I was personally in contact with a young German comrade who put out leaflets for us in German. He fell into the hands of the Gestapo, was shot, left for dead on the spot, picked up somehow by worker comrades, and taken to a hospital, where the Nazis unfortunately recaptured him and probably shot him again.

When the Liberation took place, our friends quite rightly insisted that the democratic principles proclaimed by the new government applied to them as well as to others. They asked for the right to publish their paper legally (it had put out 78 issues illegally). I might note that in actual practice one cannot publish a journal in France today without first getting the permission of the Government. This permission was refused our comrades, under pressure of the Communists, who spread the abominable slander that our comrades, who had been imprisoned and shot by the Gestapo, were in reality "Fifth Columnists."

Almost daily the Government gives permission for some reactionary paper, which was not even in the Resistance movement, to reappear, but continues to refuse permission to our comrades. Recently some one saw the Minister of Information, M. Pierre-Henri Tietgen, and showed him copies of publications expressing our views which have appeared legally in England, Belgium, South Africa and the United States, pointing out that the great democratic powers today even in the midst of war had remained faithful to the ideals of freedom in this respect. But he continued to refuse permission.

(*Paris, February* 18, 1945)

GEORGE SCHUYLER'S POLITICS

Sir:

I can understand your impatience with some of the pietistic eulogies written to Roosevelt, but if you had wanted to publish a critical evaluation of the late president, I should think you might have looked to sources other than the *Pittsburgh Courier*.

What Schuyler says of Roosevelt is, of course, accurate, but I would hesitate in praising his "intellectual acuteness" and "moral courage." Schuyler speaks disparagingly of Roosevelt as the representative of America's Sixty Families,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but . . . he was a leading supporter of Thomas E. Dewey in the '44 elections.

BROOKLYN, N. Y. HENRY J. GOLDSTEIN

—I do not know where Brother Goldstein got the idea that I was "a leading supporter" of Thomas E. Dewey in the 1944 *elections. On September* 16, 1944, *I stated in "Views and Reviews" that "while Brother Dewey criticizes the Roosevelt regime for its sins of omissions and commissions, the fact remains that he has nothing concrete to offer. The reason for this is that the Democrats and Republicans alike support the same dominant economic interest". I also stated in the same column that "of all the candidates and parties, only Norman Thomas and the Socialists have a program that does not point directly to Nazi-Communism . . . so there will be no appreciable change except in the direction of Fascism, whichever of the big parties wins the election. You wonder indeed why the people should bother to vote at all when they have so little choice".*

The only statement in my writings during the last campaign that could possibly be construed as favorable to Dewey appeared in "Views and Reviews" on October 14 *which read "what of Dewey and his Republican Commorrah? They are preferred to this crowd because they are uncamouflaged agents of monopolists who will less easily fool the worker then the New Deal double-talkers and so spur them to revolt more quickly. All the sixty families want is complete control of the unions and they can rule forever. Roosevelt is giving them that with the aid of the CIO-PAC, which is getting powerful support from the artistic and entertainment crowd forced by their agents into loudly vocal support of FDR'."*

In addition to the above, I was one of the scheduled speakers at the Socialist Party pre-election rally.

NEW YORK CITY GEORGE S. SCHUYLER

Individuals, Awake!

A few days ago two young men went into a small town somewhere in Upper Michigan. They wanted to phone a news-story to a paper in Chicago. They were told by the clerk of the store that a Mr. Nelson had said that no long distance calls were to be made that day. Finally, after some trouble, they received permission to get their call through. In San Francisco, on the Embarcadero, a sailor went into a tattooing parlor. It seemed that before the navy would accept him he must have clothes tattooed over the nude girl on his elbow. It happens that the two young men were members of a minority: they were conscientious objectors. It was the director of their camp who had forbidden them the use of the public phone. As for the sailor, well, in some quarters a nude girl, tattooed or real, is still considered daring. The two young men had, in only another way, still another proof of their persecution as members of a minority. For it was as a minority they were persecuted, not as conscientious objectors.

In this day of bureaucratic government it is not the belief, but the group holding it, which is called up for judgment. It is as a member of a minority, and not as a man with ideas of his own that the individual is called up for a reckoning. Pacifism, for example, is not criticized on ethical grounds—many, indeed, admit that in less martial times they, too, would be pacifists—but on the grounds that it is in opposition to the government in power. Any soapbox orator may denounce the government to a few bums, but if he is a member of an organization lecturing a union he becomes liable to censure and arrest.

Little by little, in allowing ourselves to be treated as groups and not as individuals, we are giving up our liberty.

For the individual no longer protests to effect. Only the group voice is heard, for only the group voice has the power to be heard. Judgment, freedom, liberty based upon ethics have been replaced by a freedom, a judgment, a liberty based upon the pragmatic unassailability of power.

In England the gypsies have been persecuted, not deliberately, not intentionally, but by the colorless machinery of an automatically functioning bureaucracy. There is no particular reason for this, other than that it has become moral for the individual to conform, and nothing is so important to us as the morality of our neighbours. Our psychologists spend their public hours in pointing out that the abnormal man is the man who in any way deviates from the common practice. And what is the common practice? It is the line of least resistance pushed to the vanishing point.

It has been pointed out that the complexities of the modern world call for a bureaucracy. But they call for a bureaucracy only in order to perpetuate themselves. And of what good is this to any but bureaucrats? Surely something is wrong when one out of every fifty men is employed in recording and regulating the private lives of the other forty-nine.

All this constriction, all this regulated security and false freedom is surely less an enjoyment of life than a use of it, a use to what purpose if not the erection of complicated systems for reducing everything to a common denominator for the sum of all things we have long lost the integrity, the personal courage to face.

If America turns totalitarian it will be not the fault of a victorious clique, but of all the people who did not turn a hair when someone said, I'll do it for you.

GERMFASK, MICH. DAVID DEREK STACTON

THE WRONG BOTTLE.

Sir:

Savage's "supernatural origin and end of man" implies not a respect for man's dignity and individuality, as he asserts, but the opposite. His identification of himself with God as created "in God's image" and the psychopath's identification of himself with, for example, Napoleon, spring from the same broad root — a horrible feeling of inadequacy, of Nichtigkeit.

The just criticism of the vulgar materialism which passes for the Marxist viewpoint and of the opportunism which passes for practicality does not make Savage's alternative — an act of (Christian) faith — in the least necessary or salutary. . . .

Savage accuses "doctrinaire" socialism of being a "pseudo-religion", of having only limited, *historical* perspectives as distinguished from the *eternal* perspectives of Christianity. Socialism is a pseudo-religion only to those who demand of it that it be a religion. To one who goes to the medicine chest for a sedative and comes away with the wrong bottle the bottle owes no apology.

NEW YORK CITY ARTHUR STEIG.

CORRECTIONS

Sir:

I have before me your April issue and wish to draw your attention to the quotation from *Common Sense* taken from the *Christian Science Monitor* on General Gonatas (the final syllable has an *a* and not an *o*). Although originally Plastiras had intended to appoint Gonatas as Governor-General of Thrace and Macedonia, this appointment was voided, because of the protests of the republican section of the Liberal Party, who called attention to the role played by Gonatas during the Axis occupation. It is emphatically reported that Gonatas was in touch with the notorious

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Security Battalions. Now, Gonatas has seceded from the Liberal Party, of which he was an important element, and has declared himself in favour of the return of the King.

Another error in the same paragraph is the one referring to General Pangalos. Here again, *Christian Science Monitor* has erred. As far as I can trace, Pangalos was not proposed or mentioned for the post of Commander-in-Chief, there being some ground for discord between Plastiras and Pangalos.

It is rather unfortunate that you have printed these mistaken statements without consulting some Greeks who may be familiar wih persons and situations in Greece.

STATEN ISLAND, N. Y. THEODORE DONAHOS

FROM A SOLDIER

Sir:

It is perhaps unnecessary to state that in this intellectual desert POLITICS is indeed a "cause that refreshes." The political ignorance prevailing here is something one must see before one can believe it—yet it is entirely natural, since political action has not been able to produce any advantage for many. For example, when it was mentioned that Greece has been "liberated", one soldier complained about the ungrateful Greeks fighting their "liberators."

Racism seems at least a semi-official policy. One officer, during an orientation class, stated that the Japanese were a "beastly race", that the military group in power was backed 100% by the people, etc. . . . and that we must show no mercy but kill unhesitatingly. After Japanese-Americans arrived, we were informed that, since they were wearing the American uniform, they must not be called "yellow bastards." . . .

I agree with your evaluation of Stalinism. So far you have however not discussed how much support Stalin has from the masses. When the pressure of war has been removed, would there not at least be the possibility either of a new revolution in Russia or of enough pressure to force Stalin to give some civil liberties, which in the long run might make Russia a socialistic society?

PFC.

CAMP HOOD, TEXAS

NOTE FROM NEW HAMPSHIRE

Sir:

You have sent your prospectus to the wrong person. Nobody in this quiet mountain valley would care for your paper. We are all Jeffersonians here.

CAMPTON, N. H. M. ELMA DARRIE

—"*A little rebellion now and then is a good thing. . . . God forbid we should ever be twenty years without such a rebellion. . . . The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure.*" — *Thomas Jefferson on Shays' Rebellion.*

BENES AND SCHWEIK

Sir:

May I add a footnote to the excellent review by Jackson MacLow of "Schweik, the Good Soldier"? This great Czech contribution to world literature was kept out of the schools of Czechoslovakia and banned in the Czech army by the super-democratic Benes government. Benes probably feared, with reason, that "Schweik" would have the same dissolvent effect on his regime's pretensions as it had on those of Archduke Franz-Ferdinand.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF. J. LELEK

Complete your files of **politics**!

Back issues are still available:

No. 1. February 1944.
Walter J. Oakes: Toward a Permanent War Economy
Dwight Macdonald: A Theory of Popular Culture

No. 2. March 1944.
Peter Meyer: The Soviet Union, a New Class Society (Part 1)
Daniel Bell: The Coming Tragedy of American Labor

No. 3. April 1944.
C. Wright Mills: The Powerless People, or The Intellectual in Society
Peter Meyer: The Soviet Union, a New Class Society (Part Two)

No. 4. May 1944.
Kurt List: The Music of Soviet Russia
George Padmore: Anglo-American Condominium

No. 5. June 1944.
Nicola Chiaromonte: Croce and Italian Liberalism
Isaac G. McNatt: "I Was a Seabee"

No. 6. July 1944.
Don Calhoun: The Political Relevance of Conscientious Objection
Dwight Macdonald: How "Practical" is a Jim Crow Army?

No. 7. August 1944.
Bruno Bettelheim: Behavior in Extreme Situations (Notes on a Year in Nazi Concentration Camps)
Wilfred H. Kerr: "Negroism", Strange Fruit of Segregation
Robert Duncan: The Homosexual in Society

No. 8. September 1944.
Dwight Macdonald: War as an Institution (1): Notes on the Psychology of Killing

No. 9. October 1944.
John J. Brown: American Technology, Myth v. Reality
Max Weber: Class, Status, Party

No. 10. November 1944.
"Dual Power" in France — Hitherto Unpublished Documents
George Orwell: The Ethics of the Detective Story

No. 11. December 1944.
Llewellyn Queener: War as an Institution (3): Inter-Enemy Ethics

No. 12. January, 1945.
Greece: the Full Story (1)
"Gallicus": Hitler, the Liberals' "Indispensable Man"

No. 13. February, 1945.
Simone Weil: Reflections on War
Meyer Schapiro: A Note on Max Weber's Politics

No. 14. March, 1945.
Dwight Macdonald: The Responsibility of Peoples
Louis Clair: The Stalintern Over Europe

No. 15. April, 1945.
"Why Am I Fighting?"

No. 16. May, 1945.
Daniel Bell: The Political Lag of Commonwealth
The Gratsos Memorandum

No. 17 June, 1945.
Conscription & Conscientious Objection, a Symposium

The above issues cost 25c apiece (No. 9: 50c.).
(Check here if you want all 17: ☐)

$4 for all seventeen.

politics, 45 Astor Place, New York 3, N. Y.

Enclosed is $..... Please send me back issues number .....
(Check here if you want all 17: ☐)

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

CITY..... UNIT..... STATE.....

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

JIM CROW AT SEA

Sir:

It's gratifying, after a six thousand mile voyage, to hit this port and find a copy of POLITICS waiting for me. The only source of news afloat is the mimeographed sheet the gang in the radio shack issues each morning. It consists of a series of laconic 'news' dispatches which are just suggestive enough to be terribly annoying. One's thirst for sound progressive interpretation is enormous.

Some time ago, I wrote a letter which was printed in the "Free & Equal" section, in which I stated that in Navy hospitals Negro patients weren't segregated. I hope that no one interpreted this as a change, however slight, in the traditional Navy attitude. For at sea the plight of the Negro is tragic. His only work—on virtually all vessels, the only exceptions being those "all Negro ships" which are used as publicity gags—is playing lackey to the officers. All Negroes are rated as "Steward's Mate" or "Officers' Cooks", which means long hours and complete segregation. Because of the peculiar nature of discipline and military control at sea, the Negro is deprived of the avenues of protest he would have ashore. His only recourse is to adopt a completely lackadaisical attitude, thus making his "marsters" think he is stupid. On shore, many jump ship, but are invariably caught, punished, and sent to sea again.

One interesting incident: while we were at sea, one of the Steward's Mates, a man of some courage, was placed in Sick Bay. When the medical corpsman assigned him to the Insane Ward (to segregate him), he objected vigorously. When I came down the next day, he had forced the corpsman to cover the sign, "Insane Ward", with adhesive tape! The following night, he was in a ward with white seamen. But his militant attitude is unusual, and is perhaps due to the fact that he was only recently recruited; most of the Stewards' Mates are resigned to their fate. Incidentally, the doctors and all but a few corpsmen insist on complete segregation. Traditional racial attitudes are strengthened, not weakened, in close quarters at sea.

SEAMAN

COMING FEATURES:

AUGUST

Simone Weil: **The Iliad, Poem of Force.**

Washington Letter—a New Department

Jean Malaquais: **Louis Aragon, or the Professional Patriot**

Harold Orlansky: **A Note on Anti-Semitism among Negroes**

Arthur Steig: **Jazz—Clock and Song of our Anxiety**

Nancy Macdonald: **Are Hospitals Made for Patients, or Vice-Versa?**

Francy Calhoun: **It Happened in the USA—Footnotes on the Emberg Case**

Can Capitalism Be Humanized? Full-dress reviews of Sir William Beveridge's "Full Employment in a Free Society" and A. P. Lerner's "The Economics of Control." By Robert Anders and Arnold Bruggers.

P. J. Proudhon: **The General Idea of the Revolution in the 19th Century (selections)**

The OCTOBER issue will be a special number devoted to the consideration of

"NEW ROADS IN POLITICS"

This will deal with basic aspects of leftwing theory and practice in the post World War II period. What should be scrapped, what modified, what retained of Marxist theory? What may be learned from other liberating philosophies—Proudhon, Gandhi, the "Utopian" Socialists, Kropotkin, the 18th Century "Enlightenment", etc.? What can we do in this country today to advance towards libertarian socialism?

Contributions dealing with such general perspectives are invited. Deadline: September 1.

Partial list of contents:

***Dwight Macdonald:* "The Root Is Man"**

***Albert Votaw:* Toward a Personalist Socialist Philosophy**

***"Gallicus":* The Strange Case of the "Different" War**

***K. L. N. Sinha:* For a "Green" International of Colonial Peoples**

***James Peck:* A Note on Direct Action**

***Will Herberg:* Personalism against Totalitarianism**

CONTRIBUTORS

Terence Donaghue lives on Staten Island (N. Y.); he is a commercial ferret-breeder . . . **Paul Goodman** has taught at the University of Chicago and elsewhere; his first novel was "The Grand Piano"; Vanguard is bringing out his second book shortly. . . . **William Worthy, Jr.**, a 1942 graduate of Bates College, lives in Newark, N. J., and works for a national union. . . . **Wilfred H. Kerr** is chairman of the Lynn Committee to Abolish Segregation in the Armed Forces.

The only way to be sure of getting every issue of ***politics*** *is to subscribe. It costs $2.50 a year, $4 for two years. Add 30c a year for Canada, 50c elsewhere. Servicemen and C.O.'s anywhere may subscribe for $1.75 a year.*

Address Nancy Macdonald, Business Manager.

Nancy Macdonald, Politics, 45 Astor Place, New York 3, N.Y.
Enclosed find $..... Please send me one (two) year (s) of "Politics."

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

CITY..... UNIT..... STATE.....

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED